

Turkey allows limited use of Kurdish

ANKARA (AP) — Parliament Friday approved a landmark bill allowing limited use of the Kurdish language and scrapping bans on advocating communist, fascist and Muslim-fundamentalist forms of government. The bill also includes a wide-ranging partial amnesty for prisoners. Under the legislation, the parliament allowed Kurds to speak their language in unofficial settings and listen to Kurdish-language music. Kurdish remained outlawed in education, political propaganda, publishing and broadcasting. The changes, strongly pushed by President Turgut Ozal, reflected Turkey's eagerness to ease remaining vestiges of the military rule that ended in 1983, and to improve its human rights profile in the West. The European Community has cited limits on democratic freedoms as one of the major reasons for shelving Turkey's bid for membership in the trading bloc. The bill was introduced by the government three months ago. It lifts a ban on Kurdish imposed by the former military rulers in 1983. The bill was the first step towards recognising the ethnic rights of the restive Kurdish population in Turkey, which is estimated at around 12 million.



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Arafat holds talks with French envoy

TUNIS (R) — A French envoy held two hours of talks with Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat in Tunis, the PLO said Friday. French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas is due in Tunis later this month for talks on Middle East peace prospects and is expected to meet the Palestinian leader. The PLO said Mr. Arafat's discussions with Patrick Leclercq, director of Middle Eastern and North African affairs at the French Foreign Ministry, included the situation in the Middle East, the Gulf, Lebanon and the Israeli-occupied territories.

U.N. chief visits France

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar Friday left for a week-long trip to France where he will address the European Parliament, U.N. officials said. The officials said that Mr. Perez de Cuellar would address the parliament Tuesday in Strasbourg, France. He then will go to Paris for four days and preside over the U.N. Administrative Committee on Coordination, a U.N. body which oversees U.N. internal affairs and reform. He returns to New York next weekend.

Crude oil price climbs

LONDON (R) — Oil prices climbed Friday to their highest level in London for two months, with benchmark Brent blend crude rising above \$20 a barrel to the surprise of many traders in the market. Brent blend futures for May on London's International Petroleum Exchange (IPE) traded as high as \$20.15 a barrel before falling back to \$19.96, up 41 cents, by 1730 GMT.

Dates for Indian elections announced

NEW DELHI (AP) — India will hold its 10th general elections over three days beginning May 20, the election commission announced Friday. Other polling days will be May 23 and 26, chief election commissioner T.N. Seshan said. He said polling in the strife-torn states of Punjab, Assam and Jammu-Kashmir will be held separately and that the dates will be announced later. The elections were called after Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar quit on March 7. He was the second prime minister to resign since the last parliamentary elections 18 months ago. President Ramaswamy Venkataraman dissolved parliament after it became clear that no political party could garner a majority in the legislature.

Chinese president falls ill

BEIJING (AP) — President Yang Shangkun suddenly fell ill Friday and cancelled a meeting with a visiting prime minister, the minister's delegation said. Mr. Yang, 84, one of several octogenarians still holding power in China, was scheduled to meet Papua New Guinea Prime Minister Rabbie Namaliu in the afternoon. But Chinese officials told the delegation at the last minute that Mr. Yang was ill and would have to cancel, said Jim Wain, a Papua New Guinea parliamentary official. He said they were not given details of Mr. Yang's illness.

Britain lifts visa curbs on Iraqis

LONDON (AP) — Home Secretary Kenneth Baker Friday lifted a blanket ban on Iraqis travelling to Britain or applying for visa extensions. "In view of the suspension of the (Gulf war) hostilities and the recent U.N. Security Council resolution on ceasefire arrangements in the Gulf, I am satisfied that it is now safe and consistent with the national interest for these restrictions to be rescinded," Mr. Baker said in a statement. In September Mr. Baker barred Iraqi students from coming to Britain, citing a threat to national security. Other Iraqi nationals were barred in January soon after the start of the Gulf war.

Masri holds two-hour meeting with Baker in Geneva

Jordan agrees to attend conference but differences with U.S. remain

GENEVA (Agencies) — Jordan informed the United States Friday it would attend a Middle East peace conference only if it is based on the principle that Israel returned occupied Arab territories in return for peace. "Jordan will attend the conference," Foreign Minister Taher Al Masri told reporters after meeting with U.S. Secretary of State James Baker.

He said the participation was based on conditions, including the principle of land-for-peace and international auspices. Israeli leaders have cautiously approved the concept of peace talks but steadfastly oppose "territorial concessions."

Mr. Masri said he was "moderately optimistic" about Mr. Baker's drive to set up negotiations. Mr. Baker and Syrian Foreign Minister Farouq Al Sharaa talked with reporters in Damascus earlier Friday, as the secretary wrapped up a weeklong trip to the Middle East.

"We agree that there's a window of opportunity here to move the peace process forwards and that we should try not to miss that window of opportunity," Mr.

Baker said in Damascus. He said he felt he had made "some progress" towards opening talks aimed at bringing peace to the region (see story below).

"Jordan will attend a peace conference and peace for Jordan is a strategy and not a tactic," Mr. Masri told reporters in Geneva.

Mr. Masri, for whom the meeting represented a renewal of high-level contacts with the United States, said the principle of ending land for peace was central to the process.

Mr. Masri said Mr. Baker had raised the idea of a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation. Jordan would consider it as long as the Palestinians agreed but would not impose its views on them, he said.

Mr. Masri also spoke about U.S. aid, cut off by Congress this week to mark its displeasure at Jordan's Gulf war stance.

Mr. Baker stressed the importance of holding a peace conference in the peace process in the Middle East, it said. "We are looking forward to discussing these kinds of questions with the foreign minister of Jordan because Jordan is a very important country in that process as I indicated a month or so in an interview in the U.S.," Baker said.

In his remarks after his meeting with Mr. Baker, Mr. Masri said the talks were constructive and useful, adding that official contacts between Amman and Washington will be resumed.

However, Mr. Masri noted, there are still some differences in the Jordanian and U.S. views on resolving the Middle East question.

He stressed that the Palestinian representation at a proposed conference for solving the Palestine problem was raised with Mr. Baker and that Jordan initially has no objection to the formation of a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation.

However, he said, such an issue should first be discussed and settled with the Palestinians and Jordan is not going to suggest this.

Mr. Masri outlined the importance of holding a peace conference voicing optimism over efforts being initiated by the United States.

He said Jordan attaches special attention to the essence and contents of negotiations during the proposed conference. He added that Jordan gives high priority to the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 and the observance of the land-for-peace principle.

Israeli opposition leader Shimon Peres, who also met Mr. Baker in Geneva, said the issue of Israeli settlement in the occupied territories could torpedo the talks.

Mr. Baker ended his trip by meeting with foreign ministers of Luxembourg, Italy and the Netherlands. Officials said he was likely to return to the Middle East quickly, perhaps within a week or two.

Luxembourg Foreign Minister Jacques Poos said his hour-long meeting with Mr. Baker focused on the mass Kurdish exodus from Iraq.

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U.N. role a must in peace talks, Syria informs U.S.

DAMASCUS (Agencies) — Syria insisted Friday that the United Nations must play "a significant role" in a Middle East peace conference.

U.S. Secretary of State James Baker, winding up a regional visit after talks with President Hafez Al Assad, said both Washington and Damascus saw a "window of opportunity" for Arab-Israeli peacemaking following the Gulf war.

He did not, however, win vital Syrian backing for a "regional" peace conference — an idea accepted in outline by Israel and cautiously supported by Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

As discussed on Mr. Baker's earlier stops in Israel and Egypt, a regional conference would be chaired by the United States and attended by Israel, Arab states and the Soviet Union. How Palestinians would be represented is still an open question.

Mr. Baker talked with Mr. Assad late into the night and held a joint press conference Friday morning with Foreign Minister Farouq Al Sharaa.

Both spoke of agreement and disagreement on issues discussed but said they were determined to work for a just and comprehensive peace and to continue the

discussion. Mr. Sharaa said his government and the United States were determined to pursue a "just and comprehensive settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian problem."

Mr. Baker left for Geneva after the news conference, winding up a four-nation swing through the region. "It's been a long night," Mr. Baker quipped on returning to his hotel Thursday night after talks with Mr. Assad.

The Syrian media took a tough line on an Israeli peace talks proposal that Mr. Baker carried to Arab leaders.

The newspaper Tishrin, which usually reflects government thinking, said: "The rulers of Tel Aviv want to demolish diplomatic efforts carried by Washington through Secretary Baker."

Elsewhere on his weeklong Mideast trip, Mr. Baker found interest in bringing Arabs, Israelis and Palestinians to the bargaining table.

"We've made some progress but there's still a lot that has to be done," Mr. Baker said prior to his meeting with Mr. Assad. "It's a long road we have to travel and we hope people wouldn't, therefore, rush to judgment. You

know, it's not just black or white."

A senior U.S. official travelling with Mr. Baker told reporters Thursday: "The sense I have is that they're all looking for a way to make something happen...everybody we've talked to wants a process to happen, has, I think, a desire for it."

Mr. Sharaa told Reuters that "Syria opposes the regional conference and wants a peace conference in which the United Nations would have a significant role."

Mr. Baker described his 5½ hours of talks with Mr. Assad as "useful" and said he made progress during his tour. Israel has accepted the idea of a "regional" peace conference and rejected an "international" one because the second would imply acceptance of U.N. resolutions calling for its withdrawal from occupied Arab territories.

Mr. Sharaa said Syria and the U.S. were determined to reach "just and comprehensive peace in the region — to be based on U.N. Resolutions 242 and 338 — and that a peace conference be held in order to implement U.N. resolutions."

Mr. Baker, asked what

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Israeli air raid kills 8 in S. Lebanon

SIDON, Lebanon (Agencies) — Israeli planes attacked a Palestinian base in South Lebanon Friday despite a campaign for peace by the government in Beirut.

Security sources said four planes fired 12 rockets into a base for the Fateh Revolutionary Council (FRC) led by Abu Nidal near Sahbiyah village, five kilometres east of Sidon.

At least four guerrillas were killed and eight wounded, they added.

FRC guerrillas sealed off the area and turned back journalists as black smoke billowed from the base.

An Israeli army spokesman said the planes hit a "target" used as a staging ground for attacks and returned safely. Sidon is 40 kilometres south of Beirut.

The air strike was the eighth by Israel into Lebanon this year. The previous raids — all against Palestinian camps — killed a total of seven people and wounded 55.

Lebanon marks the 16th anniversary of the start of its civil war Saturday. Fighting broke out in Beirut on April 13, 1975, after militants fired on a bus full of Palestinians.

The government has ordered all armed groups in Lebanon to disarm by the end of April or risk being crushed by the army as part of a drive to secure the country and put a lasting end to the civil war.

Some Palestinian groups have withdrawn heavy weapons from the Beirut area. But Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) guerrillas have vowed to keep their weapons.

The FRC is outside the PLO. Lebanese envoy Mohsen Ibrahim held talks this week with PLO leader Yasser Arafat and Algerian President Chadli Benjedid in an effort to mediate between the government and Palestinians.

Some Lebanese officials have said some groups fighting to force Israeli troops and their Lebanese allies out of the Jewish state's "security zone" in South Lebanon could keep their guns.

Security sources said four bombs exploded Friday in two cars and two houses of officials of the Shiite Muslim Amal militia in the village of Tair Debbeh.

The explosions caused minor damage but not casualties. Amal has said it is willing to abide by government orders to disarm.

Two nearby bases manned by guerrillas from Dr. George Habash's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and Talaat Yagoub's Palestine Liberation Front were hit by shrapnel, police said. Their lunch

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Cheney to close, cut bases

WASHINGTON (AP) — Defence Secretary Dick Cheney is recommending the closure of 31 major domestic military bases and the closure or downsizing of 198 overseas facilities, according to documents obtained Friday by the Associated Press. The defence chief also recommends closing 12 minor domestic installations and the realignment of 25 others. "By 1995, the number of people in the U.S. military will be about one-fourth smaller than it is today. Smaller forces need fewer bases. It's as simple as that," Mr. Cheney said in a statement. The estimated cost of closing the facilities is \$5.7 billion from fiscal 1992 to fiscal 1997 while the savings will amount to about \$6.5 billion. That means a net gain of \$800 million, the Defence Department said. All four services — the army, navy, air force and marine corps — will be affected. Mr. Cheney has the authority to shut down foreign installations but for domestic closures must submit a list for a decision-making process. Mr. Cheney did not name the foreign bases.

U.S. plans to establish 'relief' camps inside Iraq

Combined agency dispatches

TURKEY SAID Friday the United States planned to set up refugee camps inside northern Iraq and on the Turkish-Iraqi border.

"The United States, in accordance with U.N. Resolution 688 and within the framework of the Turkish government's permission, will start a large scale operation to help Iraqis massed on the Turkish-Iraqi border," a Foreign Ministry statement said.

"This operation... envisages setting up temporary settlements in Turkish-Iraqi border regions and northern Iraq to help meet the most urgent needs of Iraqis who are living in extremely difficult conditions," the statement said.

"This operation is exclusively humanitarian and it will continue until U.N. agencies complete their preparations to relay relief aid efficiently and regularly to the needy," the statement said.

The United States said on Thursday its "Operation Provide Comfort" would meet basic needs of 700,000 refugees for 30 days.

"We will feed, clothe and shelter a population larger than that of Richmond, Virginia," U.S. Vice President Dan Quayle said. U.S. cargo planes began a 10-day programme to drop supplies to refugees in mountains just inside Iraq Sunday.

Turkish officials say nearly 500,000 Iraqis have fled to the ill-defined Turkish frontier since Iraqi troops crushed last month's Kurdish rebellion in northern Iraq. At last 2,000 were known to have died.

A mission led by the U.S. Agency for International De-

velopment and Foreign Disaster Assistance Office was due to leave Ankara Friday to assess needs in the border region.

A camp supervisor said seven Iraqi refugees, including a pregnant woman, were killed Friday when relief crates dropped by Western planes fell on their tents along the Turkish border.

Basri Tay, Iraq supervisor of a camp holding an estimated 50,000 refugees on a mountain plateau just inside Iraq, told Reuters the seven died there during Friday's aid drops.

The total number of casualties could not be confirmed independently but included two people witnesses said were killed on a morning supply run by C-130 Hercules aircraft.

There have been several reports of refugees being hit by Western aid crates parachuted into the bleak peaks where thousands huddle under makeshift shelters in ankle-deep mud.

Refugees said two Iraqi women were killed Tuesday. The sister of one of them told Reuters at the Cukurca mosque that she had seen one crate hit her sister.

At the U.N., the day after the Security Council officially declared an end to the Gulf war, the five permanent members of the council was discussing setting up safety zones for Kurdish refugees in northern Iraq.

Ambassadors of the United States, Britain, China, France and the Soviet Union discussed a possible U.N. resolution which would guarantee safety for Kurds, and permit distribution of humanitarian aid, Western diplomats said.

The diplomats, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the

five were considering ways to protect the Kurds short of establishing a U.N. enclave which would set a precedent and isolate Kurdish claims for a separate state.

They suggested the U.N. secretary-general might designate safe areas in northern Iraq where Kurdish refugees could receive humanitarian aid from U.N. and other international relief agencies.

U.N. officials Friday had no immediate reaction to an Associated Press report of an attack on Kurds inside a U.S. protection zone in Iraq before the formal ceasefire went into effect. U.N. officials said they sought official confirmation of the report.

On Thursday evening the Gulf war ended officially not on the battlefield, but in a sunlit room at the United Nations when Iraq's ambassador accepted a Security Council letter noting Baghdad's acceptance of U.N. terms.

Soon after, the British ambassador, Sir David Hannay, said he would begin efforts Friday to draft a new Security Council resolution requiring safety zones in northern Iraq for the Kurds.

The Soviet Union said it had serious reservations about creating a haven to protect Kurdish refugees.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Vitaly Churkin told a news conference the proposal to create "security shelters" for Kurds in northern Iraq would mean "taking away part of Iraq's sovereignty without the agreement of the Iraqi government, which would contradict United Nations charters."

British Prime Minister John

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Iraqi government is in full control of situation — Aziz

AMMAN (J.T.) — Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz Thursday wound up a two-day visit to Jordan by giving assurances that the Iraqi government and armed forces were in control of the situation in the north of Iraq.

"There is no justification for any concern over Iraq which remains united and secure," said Mr. Aziz in a statement on Jordan Television Thursday night.

"I was honoured by an audience with His Majesty King Hussein to whom I conveyed a verbal message from his brother, President Saddam Hussein," Mr. Aziz said.

He said his discussions with the King covered Jordanian-Iraqi ties. "I briefed him in detail on the situation in Iraq and we discussed Arab affairs and the political situation in general," Mr. Aziz added.

"Concerning the situation in Iraq, I would like to assure my brothers here in Jordan — people, government and leadership — that the situation in Iraq is

secure and stable," Mr. Aziz said.

Mr. Aziz, who was leaving for Sanaa and Khartoum on similar missions, said that several Iraqi officials would be touring Arab countries after the Eid Al Fitr feast, in the coming week to meet their leaders.

"In Iraq, the leadership and people are working hand in hand in the reconstruction process and for ensuring basic services to the people who have been exposed to aggression and the attacks of infiltrators coming from neighbouring countries to tamper with the country's security and stability," Mr. Aziz said.

"During the war, and as the leadership was dealing with the aggression, certain armed elements infiltrated the northern regions of Iraq and did a great deal of damage and looting in the cities and villages, but the Iraqi government took days only to reestablish stability and security," Mr. Aziz said.

Asked to comment on reports that infiltrators and Turkish

troops had entered northern Iraq, Mr. Aziz said that if that was true then "Turkey would be playing with fire" because it means interfering in Iraq's affairs.

"In Turkey, Kurds cannot use their language. They are also oppressed in Iran. These countries should remember that interfering in our affairs is a double-edged sword," Mr. Aziz was quoted by Reuters News Agency as saying.

Iraq says it has crushed post-Gulf war rebellions by Kurds in the north and Shiites in the south. Baghdad has repeatedly accused Iran of encouraging the Shiite rebellion and has warned Tehran and Ankara not to help the rebels.

Nearly 1.5 million refugees, from the turmoil in Iraq have fled towards the borders with Iran and Turkey after the defeat of the rebels.

Mr. Aziz said that Iraq's Kurdish minority, unlike those in Iran and Turkey, had political

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Pipebomb explodes in Arab Jerusalem

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R)

— A bomb exploded outside the Old City in Arab Jerusalem while some 100,000 Muslims prayed nearby at on the last Friday of Ramadan there were no injuries or damage, police said.

The charge exploded a few metres from Israeli police eating lunch at the Damascus Gate, main entrance to the Muslim Quarter in the walled Old City.

"There was a small charge, a small explosion and no injuries," police spokesman told reporters. He refused to link the blast either to the end of Ramadan or U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's mission this week.

Witnesses said police closed Damascus Gate and a main road in Arab Jerusalem and rounded up about 30 Palestinians.

Police were on patrol in Jerusalem when the explosion went off but shrapnel flew away from them, police said. Their lunch

boxes lay open at the site.

Police deployed extra forces in Arab Jerusalem on Thursday around the Al Aqsa compound, Islam's third holiest site, ahead of night prayers by thousands of Muslims.

Tens of thousands attended the Lailat Al Kadr prayers marking the start of God's revelation to the Prophet Mohammad. It was one of the biggest gatherings of worshippers since police shot dead over 20 Palestinians there in October.

The prayers passed peacefully and tens of thousands of worshippers returned to the mount for prayers Friday.

Police said they barred from Jerusalem Palestinians from the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip on Thursday night. The ban has been in force much of the time since the Gulf war preventing many Muslims from praying at Al Aqsa.

Mubarak meets Saud

CAIRO (Agencies) — Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak met Saudi Arabian Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al Faisal Friday for talks on Middle East peace efforts, Foreign Ministry sources said.

Prince Saud arrived in Cairo Thursday and met U.S. Secretary of State James Baker.

No details of his Friday talks were made public. During his Middle East tour, Mr. Baker won cautious Egyptian backing and Israeli agreement in principle for the idea of holding a regional Middle East peace conference.

But Syria, one of Washington's Gulf war allies, stood by its demand for a peace conference with a significant United Nations presence.

Mr. Baker also got an encouraging response from Saudi Arabia for the scheme. The regional forum would be

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Over 40,000 Iraqi PoWs repatriated so far

From Serene Halasa in Baghdad

OVER 40,000 Iraqi prisoners of war (PoWs) have been repatriated from allied detention since the end of the Gulf war in February, according to a spokesman for the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC).

"We have (also) repatriated over 5,000 Kuwaiti and allied PoWs," ICRC spokesman Leonard Isler said at a brief press conference held at Al Rashid hotel in Baghdad.

According to Mr. Isler, the ICRC's other main concern is water and sanitation situations in Iraq. "The ICRC attaches great importance to improve the quality of the water supply system within the cities, (by) providing technical assistance," he said.

The ICRC has also extended help by providing generators and fuel to operate the generators. "We have up till the end of March provided 260 tonnes of fuel. The process is continuing as more fuel is coming everyday from Jordan," he said.

"We also have brought in four water lines producing potable water," Mr. Isler said. "We have provided to hospitals potable water, we have installed water tanks with big capacities in Baghdad, and we are trying to improve the sewage system by providing generators," he added. As for fear of widespread epidemics, Mr. Isler said that the ICRC was working hard to improve and provide potable water by starting up generators, and getting spare parts needed for their operation.

As for the situation outside Baghdad, Mr. Isler said that the ICRC has "sub-delegations in Basra and Nassiriyah."

"In a few days one of our water line production machines which is currently in Baghdad will be transferred to Basra, to produce potable water for the most vulnerable population, which means the sick, the people in hospitals," he said.

ICRC activities are also taking place in other cities in Iraq. "We have plans to install a second water line in Nassiriyah. Actually we have four water purification machines with big capacities. We have one here in Al Husseiniah which can produce up to 40,000 bags of potable water a day," he added.

"Water and sanitation aspects have also been carried out in Kirkuk, Nassiriyah, Basra, Najaf, Karbala, Hillah and Irbil," Mr. Isler said.

"Hospitals in Baghdad, Karbala, Najaf, Irbil and Basra have been provided with food for the patients," Mr. Isler said. "These

rations include nine kilos of wheat flour, six kilos of rice, lentils, cheese, tinned fish, and sugar," he added. The ICRC has distributed rations for almost 20,000 hospital beds all over Iraq for the month of April, the spokesman said.

So far, Mr. Isler said, the total budget of the operation has been 140 million Swiss francs. "There is a new appeal being launched because the needs are very great especially in the forthcoming hot season," he said.

Another field the ICRC is busy tackling is Red Cross messages from prisoners of war and tracing activities. "So far we have been able to distribute Red Cross messages, messages to anxious families awaiting news from their captured family members," Mr. Isler said.

The ICRC currently has eighty expatriates working in Iraq. "The ICRC expects more expatriates to arrive, including more sanitary technicians, doctors, and nurses," Mr. Isler said. "We will try together with the health authorities, sanitation authorities and the Iraqi Red Crescent to improve the overall situation in the medical field and also in the sanitation field," he said.

Fresh ICRC appeal

The ICRC has launched a new appeal for 104 million Swiss francs for its relief activities in the region, further to its previous appeal made on January 17, 1991.

The financial support which the ICRC hopes to obtain from the international community will enable the institution to continue and step up its humanitarian activities on the spot, now that an official ceasefire has put an end to the hostilities between Iraq and the countries of the coalition, the ICRC said in Geneva.

To meet the large-scale humanitarian needs created by the conflict, ICRC delegates have been focusing on the repatriation of prisoners of war and civilian internees, visits to places of detention, tracing missing persons and, in cooperation with the national Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, providing emergency relief designed to prevent epidemics, it said.

The ICRC is also doing its utmost to provide assistance and protection for the victims of the internal conflict which broke out in Iraq in early March. It has reminded the civilian and military authorities on several occasions that they are duty bound to do everything possible to ensure respect for the basic humanitarian principles which must be preserved in such situations, the all Swiss agency said.



'The most vulnerable in Iraq are infants and mothers'

Relief for victims of allied war in Iraq far below required level — Red Crescent

Text and photos by Mariam M. Shahin Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Health and sanitation conditions in Iraq are deteriorating at a very quick and dangerous level and urgently need humanitarian help remains marginal as the international media and relief organisations are focusing attention on humanitarian aid for Iraqi Kurds who have fled Iraq for Turkey and Iran.

In an attempt to address some of the health and sanitation needs faced by the 18 million Iraqis as a result of the Gulf war, the League of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (LIRCRC) in Geneva has launched an appeal for greatly needed relief, said a high-ranking official of the Iraqi Red Crescent Society upon his return from Geneva.

The LIRCRC has been successful in raising half of the SF 35 million (\$16.5 million) for humanitarian and relief supplies which it needs to carry out its mission in Iraq, more than one month after the ceasefire was announced, said Dr. Khaled Abdul Hameed, head of the external relations at the Iraqi Red Crescent Society, on his return from Geneva.

Arrangements have been made for an Iraqi Red Crescent representative to be stationed in Amman in order to help the LIRCRC and other international relief organisations coordinate humanitarian relief efforts.

Earlier this week at a LIRCRC meeting in Geneva, an agreement was signed to coordinate all activities in the area of relief and sanitation with the Iraqi Red Crescent Society. Mr. Abdul Hameed said.

He said that despite the fact that numerous organisations have already visited Iraq on fact-finding missions, the actual response of humanitarian and relief organisations has been slow and not in any way proportional to the amount of aid needed in Iraq.

Breakouts of diarrhoea diseases which cause the death of children in as few as three hours have already been reported by the Red Cross in Baghdad. The Red Cross also reported that at least two cases of polio had been diagnosed. According to Red Crescent officials here no polio cases had been reported in Iraq for the past eight years.

Sanitary and health conditions get worse daily as the

weather conditions change and the total breakdown in communications continue to hinder the flow of information from reaching the head office based in Baghdad.

While the Iraqi Red Crescent has chapters in all parts of Iraq and major centres in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul and the southern Iraqi city of Basra, information about conditions there can only be obtained by visiting the region and lack of fuel makes constant visits by health officials difficult.

The National Committee for Relief in Iraq, headed by Deputy Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Riyadh Al Qaysi, has had two meetings to date to coordinate attempts to render humanitarian and relief assistance.

The committee has concentrated on the need to coordinate relief activities so that duplication would not occur; Mr. Abdul Hameed said. Among the relief projects being coordinated was the setting up of field hospitals in areas where medical services are no longer available to the population.

Mr. Abdul Hameed warned that if massive governmental and non-governmental aid was not provided, Iraqis would soon face major catastrophes

which would result in the deaths of hundreds if not thousands.

"The most vulnerable in Iraq are the infants and the mothers. They would be the first to die if health and sanitary conditions remain as they are," said a foreign health official who recently returned from Iraq.

Consignments of medicines and food already ordered and paid for by the Iraqi government long before international sanctions were imposed in August are still frozen at ports and airports all over the world and await interpretation by the U.N. Sanctions Committee before they can be delivered to Iraq.

Despite clauses in the U.N. sanctions resolution — which exempted food and medicines from the embargo — virtually nothing has entered Iraq since last August.

Iraq imported 70 per cent of its food prior to August and imported an average of \$2 million of medicines a month. The Iraqis have not been able to find alternative foodstuffs and medicines. Millions may face starvation if food is not shipped to Iraq immediately, the head of one international relief organisation told the Jordan Times.

Palestinian journalist released from prison

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Palestinian journalist Radwan Abu Ayyash was freed from an Israeli prison Friday after serving five months of "administrative detention" for alleged leadership of the Palestinian uprising.

Mr. Abu Ayyash arrived at his home in Ramallah north of Jerusalem and greeted his family with the words "peace to all of you."

Mr. Abu Ayyash was one of a half-dozen leading Palestinian figures jailed by Israel over the past six months for anti-Israeli activities stemming from the 40-month uprising.

Most were held "administrative detention" rules that allow the jailing of a suspect without formal charge or trial.

Among those who remain in jail are Sari Nusseibeh, a professor of Islamic philosophy at the West Bank's Bir Zeit University; Ziad Abu Ziad, editor of an Arab weekly published in Hebrew, and Dr. Ahmad Al Yazji, a Gaza Strip physician.

Mr. Abu Ayyash, 41, was ordered jailed by Defence Minister Moshe Arens for alleged incitement and helping to run the uprising. He was held in the Inad prison near the West Bank city of Nablus, his family said.

The arrest was criticised by Western diplomats and human rights groups because Mr. Abu Ayyash is seen as a moderate leader and a potential negotiator in peace talks.

He also had been jailed for six months by the Israelis in the early months of the uprising.

Mr. Abu Ayyash heads the Arab Journalists Association in the occupied territories. He is one of the few leaders to come out of a refugee camp. He was born in the Al Askar refugee camp near Nablus.

"He is married and has three daughters and a son."

In ordering his arrest, Israeli military authorities said Abu Ayyash was a member of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and had directed "active members of hit squads of Fateh," the mainstream PLO faction. The army never charged him.

Mr. Abu Ayyash has been named in Israeli court documents as a leader of the Palestinian uprising.

Former Defence Minister Yitzhak Rabin said this week Mr. Abu Ayyash was among Palestinians agreed by Israel and Egypt as possible delegates to talks on a now defunct 1989 Israeli plan for elections in the occupied territories.

The plan collapsed last year over Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's refusal to accept U.S. terms for Palestinian representation in the preparatory talks, the same issue which could block Washington's current Middle East peace campaign.

Mr. Abu Ayyash had regularly met visiting foreign officials. Israel rejected U.S. requests for him and three other jailed Arabs to be freed early so they could join Palestinians who met Secretary of State James Baker in occupied Jerusalem on Tuesday.

Text of ceasefire letter

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Following is the text of the letter given by the president of the Security Council to the Iraqi ambassador Thursday noting Iraq's acceptance of truce terms and declaring a ceasefire:

"I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your communication dated 6 April 1991 (Document S-22456).

"You thereby transmit to me the letter addressed to me by the minister for foreign affairs of Iraq, the penultimate paragraph of which contains official notification of the acceptance, irrevocable and without qualifying conditions, by Iraq of Resolution 687 (1991), in accordance with paragraph 33 of that resolution.

"You have subsequently confirmed to me on behalf of your government, during our meeting on 8 April 1991, that the above-mentioned letter constitutes Iraq's irrevocable and unqualified acceptance of Resolution 687 (1991) in accordance with paragraph 33 of that resolution. You have also transmitted to me the acceptance by Iraq's National Assembly on 6 April 1991 of the aforesaid resolution, and confirmed to me, in the name of your government, the Revolutionary Command Council has used its constitutional powers to make this decision legally binding in the Republic of Iraq.

"The members of the Security Council have, accordingly, asked me to note that the conditions established in paragraph 33 of Resolution 687 (1991) have been met and that the formal ceasefire referred to in paragraph 33 of that resolution is therefore effective.

The members of the council welcome this development as a positive step towards the full implementation of Resolution 687 (1991)."

Last Jewish emigres from Albania arrive in Israel

TEL AVIV (AP) — The last Jewish immigrants from Albania landed in Israel Thursday after years of isolation in a hardline Communist country that until recently outlawed religion.

"The Jewish diaspora of Albania no longer exists," exulted Simcha Dinitz, head of the quasi-governmental Jewish Agency which brought them here.

The last 16 men, women and children stepped off an El Al airliner into Ben Gurion airport.

The immigrants said only about a dozen Jews, most of whom had married Christians or Muslims, chose to remain with family in Albania.

In all, the Jewish Agency said 298 Albanians have come since the regime in Tirana began a major liberalisation in December following widespread pro-democracy protests. It said another 30 Albanian Jews had joined relatives in the United States.

Israeli news reports said the immigrants were flown to Israel from Italy and Greece. But officials declined comment, saying the countries that helped sought anonymity.

The newcomers arriving from Rome ranged from elderly

women, through jeans-clad teenagers anxious to start high school, to a two-year-old.

The said Albania's economic hardships were a prime reason for leaving. Bread was scarce and meat was rationed with one kilogram a week per family. They said the economy worsened after the Albanian government launched democratic reforms late last year.

Thousands of non-Jewish Albanians have fled to neighbouring countries in recent months to escape the country's economic crisis.

Unlike the Soviet Jewish immigrants, who number 230,000 since 1989, most of the Albanians insisted they did not suffer from anti-Semitism in the five cities in Albania where they were scattered.

Most of them are descended from Greek Jews who moved to Albania in the 1950s and belong to the Sephardic branch of Judaism.

They say their Muslim neighbours hid them from the Nazis, when the Germans occupied part of the country towards the end of World War II.

EC tells Bush it wants role in peace process

WASHINGTON (R) — The European Community (EC) urged President George Bush Thursday to let Europeans have a role in the Middle East process at a time when the United States is pushing a regional conference that would exclude Europe.

Israel and Egypt have endorsed in principle a proposal for regional conference that U.S. Secretary of State James Baker is discussing on his current Middle East tour. It would be held under joint sponsorship of the United States and the Soviet Union.

EC President Jacques Santer, who is also prime minister of Luxembourg, and the head of the EC's Executive Commission, Jacques Delors, discussed European concerns in an Oval Office meeting with Mr. Bush.

"The European Community has many links with the countries of this region of the Middle East, not only for the historical cultural point of view, but also from the

economic point of view," Mr. Santer told reporters after the meeting.

"I think we can have some interest and some responsibility in this peace process which is going on now. I hope so," he said.

A regional meeting would exclude parties — such as Britain, France, China and the United States — that Israel regards as biased. France has long been in favour of an international conference under U.N. auspices.

White House spokesman Martin Fitzwater told reporters the two EC leaders brought up their Middle East concerns and Mr. Bush emphasised the U.S. goal is to find a formula that will work in establishing a dialogue between Israel and the Arab countries.

"In terms of the conference idea, they did discuss it and the president simply assured them that he was not interested in any idea that shut people out."

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Fahd gives \$100,000 to American

LAS VEGAS (AP) — King Fahd of Saudi Arabia, "personally moved" by the shooting death of a Gulf war veteran, presented his mother with \$100,000, a television network reported Thursday. But the soldier did not die in the war. Anthony Riggs, 22, was shot to death on March 18, less than one day after returning to Detroit from serving with a Patriot missile unit in the war. The widely publicised slaying at first was thought to be a random street crime. Police have since arrested Riggs' wife, Toni, and her brother, Michael Cato, after alleging they killed the soldier to collect his life insurance. Both are being held on first-degree murder charges. Two emissaries from the Saudi embassy in Washington, D.C., delivered the cheque Thursday for an unspecified amount to Riggs' mother, Lessie, who lives in Las Vegas, said his sister, Berntha Lloyd: Cable News Network's Los Angeles bureau reported that the gift was for \$100,000. Lloyd refused to confirm or deny the report Thursday night and said Mrs. Riggs not available for comment. Officials were not available late Thursday at the Saudi embassy. King Fahd was "personally moved by the tragic case of army Spc. Anthony Riggs," the Saudi embassy said in a prepared statement read by Lloyd. "The gift is meant as a token of deep sympathy, personal condolence and appreciation... (and) to assuage Mrs. Riggs' anguish at the sudden and tragic loss of her son, who dispatched his duties nobly and with great honour during the Gulf conflict," it said.

Food poisoning cases in Egypt

CAIRO (AP) — Ninety cases of food poisoning have been reported after Egyptians celebrated a spring feast by eating salted fish.

newspapers say. At least eight of the cases were fatal. Daily Al Ahram newspaper said in early Friday edition that at least 90 cases of food poisoning had been admitted in hospitals in and around Cairo. The newspaper spoke of shortages of antidotes. Daily Al Akhbar newspaper said that three members of one family died of food poisoning after eating salted fish. They said another five deaths were reported at a private Cairo hospital. Last Monday, millions of Egyptians celebrated the Sham Al Nessim or smelly breeze feast which welcomes the start of spring. The feast was first celebrated by Pharaohs Egypt, and part of its tradition is eating salted fish and onions.

Israeli teenagers fined for secret trip

TEL AVIV (AP) — Two Israeli teenagers who illegally sneaked into Jordan to tour the ancient city of Petra last August were fined 3,000 shekels (\$1,500) each and ordered to do community service, newspapers reported Friday. The penalties were levied by the Beersheva district court against Hananel Shear-Yashuv and Lior Mizrahi, both 17. The daily Mavriq said the case was heard March 17. It did not say why release of the results was delayed. The maximum sentence for illegal border crossing is four years in prison. The youths had told their parents they were going on a camping trip, then sneaked into southern Jordan. When they did not return home after two weeks, Israel used diplomatic intermediaries to seek help in finding them. On Sept. 6 they were delivered to a bridge linking Jordan to the Israeli-occupied West Bank. Dozens of young Israelis have crossed the border to see Petra since the 1950s. Judge Aharon Thomsuf was quoted as saying the conviction and sentences were necessary to deter others.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 731111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

18:00 Documentary
19:00 News in French
19:15 French varieties
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 No Job for a Lady
21:00 Encounter
22:00 News in English
22:20 Feature film: "The War Wagon"

PRAYER TIMES

03:48 Fajr
05:08 (Sunrise) Duha
11:57 Dhuhr
15:12 Asr
18:06 Maghrib
19:26 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swellish, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terrasanta Church Tel. 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541
Anglican Church Tel. 625383, Tel. 625345
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Armenian International Church Tel. 685326
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811295
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 815017, 654932

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

Another rise in temperatures will take place and winds will be north-westerly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Amman Min/max. temp. 8 / 20
Aqaba 14 / 29
Deserts 6 / 22
Jordan Valley 12 / 27

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 17, Aqaba 26. Humidity readings: Amman 56 per cent, Aqaba 27 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Adnan Zaghloul 898140
Dr. Yousef Rashid 896301
Dr. Ahmad Al Daqni 676473
Dr. Abdul Qader Lala 666048
Firas pharmacy 661912
Ferdows pharmacy 778336
Al Asma pharmacy 637035
Naioukh pharmacy 636672
Al Saloun pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shmeisani pharmacy 637660

IRBID:
Dr. Mazen Abu Bakr (—)
Al Sharaf pharmacy (275825)

ZARQA:

Dr. Sabah Borini (—)
Khalith pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 891228
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 897467

AMMAN Municipality

Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone

Repairs 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

Electric Power Company 636381
RJ Flight Information (8-5320)
Queen Alia Intl. Airport (8-53200)

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussien Medical Centre 813813/32

Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn

Abdali Maternity, J. Amn 643412
Jabal Amman Maternity 643262
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 664171/4
Shmeisani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Musader Hospital 6617737
The Islamic, Abdali 6641648
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 777101/5
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 775111/26
Army, Marja 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/90
Amal Hospital 674155

ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)863323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)991071
The Sina Hospital (09)496732

IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272725
Ibn Al Nafies Hospital (02)247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.

Apple 850 / 750
Banana 500 / 450
Banana (Makassar) 450 / 400
Beans 650 / 550
Cabbage 140 / 100
Carrot 180 / 120
Cauliflower 140 / 100
Cucumbers (large) 200 / 150
Cucumbers (small) 380 / 320
Dates 1000 / 900
Eggplant 250 / 200
Garlic 500 / 400
Grapefruit 250 / 200
Lemon 300 / 250
Lettuce (per one) 150 / 100
Marrow (large) 200 / 150
Marrow (small) 400 / 350
Onion (dry) 300 / 250
Onion (green) 180 / 120
Orange 280 / 200
Pepper (hot) 720 / 650
Pepper (sweet) 240 / 180
Potato 200 / 150
Radish 200 / 150
Sage 400 / 300

Jordan Times

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Editorial and advertising offices:
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Telephones: 667171/6, 670141-4

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Peace no desert mirage

THE MEETING between the foreign minister, Taher Masri, and U.S. Secretary of State James Baker seems to have ended in making progress but no breakthroughs. As might be expected under the circumstances, the dialogue was necessary, and holding it had to be seen as a positive step. Nobody, however, could have expected it to solve all outstanding problems between the two countries, whether on the course to be taken vis-a-vis tackling the Palestinian problem or normalising relations again.

In his remarks to the press after the meeting yesterday, Mr. Masri made it clear that Jordan was interested in joining a serious peace process that promised fair and just results. This would have meant, as the minister said, that Jordan would in fact attend a peace conference but only if it is based on U.N. Security Council resolutions 242 and 338. This is, by no mere coincidence, the Syrian position as well. The last thing Jordanians and Syrians want is to be involved in a process whereby Israel calls the shots, abetted by the U.S., deflecting all attention from the core issue, which is its occupation of Arab lands and subjugation of its people.

The other point that Mr. Masri raised in his talks with Mr. Baker is the all-too-important question of Palestinian participation in the conference. While the Kingdom is willing and ready to be represented in a joint delegation, Jordanians insist that it is not for us to initiate such a move. The wisdom in this approach will be clear to all, we hope. The Palestinians cannot be substituted for in any effort to solve their problem with Israel, and they have designated the PLO as their sole and legitimate representative. Unless the would-be peace makers realise the facts of life in this region, and take them into consideration in their endeavours, it will all be an exercise in futility again.

We do not know whether these two issues, important as they are, were the only problems outstanding between the two foreign ministers. For there is easily a host of other issues that need to be discussed and tackled at this stage. But if the atmosphere of the meeting was conducive to discuss substantive issues in a frank and objective way, there can be little doubt that it could be considered progress made.

As Mr. Baker indicated in a statement earlier, the conflict is so intractable that it was not easy for him to get agreement in one, two or three shuttles in the region. Well, he just has to keep on track and try hard. It may be true that Arabs have not been faultless in their past approaches to peace efforts in the past; but, for all we know, Israel has been the main obstacle to peace. And, based on this, the secretary of state cannot afford to have his efforts derailed by an intransigent, self-righteous and myopic Israel. The Arabs are not only sincere in their drive for peace: Their political orientation at this point in time dictates that they pursue a peace strategy which will work. The Arabs will do their share, but they want to be assured that peace is the goal. They will take their chances, something they might have been accused of missing in the past. But they do not want any new chance to be a desert mirage.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

All indications point to the fact that Washington has prepared a plan to liquidate the Palestine problem and end the Arab-Israeli conflict at the expense of the Arab nation through the Baker initiative now being peddled throughout the Arab region, said Al Haq, Arabic daily Friday. The Baker plan entails substituting the international conference with a regional parity as was agreed between Israel and the United States during Baker's talks in Israel and follows the pattern of the Camp David agreements which ended the state of war between Egypt and Israel, the paper noted. By carrying out this plan, the U.S.-Israeli alliance hopes to liquidate the Palestine problem, exclude the PLO from any future negotiations and end the ongoing Palestinian intifada, the paper pointed out. The so-called regional conference which Egypt has reportedly accepted with some reservations is a carbon copy of the Camp David agreements which were rejected by the Arab countries in 1979, said the daily. The United States, the paper added, realises that the liquidation of the Palestine problem and ensuring Israel's dominance of the Arab region can only come through the dismemberment of the Arab nation, and through causing rifts among Arab ranks so that no solidarity among them and no joint action can stand up to the U.S.-Israeli conspiracies. The paper warned against the new danger and called for genuine Arab solidarity to safeguard the Palestinian people's national rights and the future of the Arab nation.

In contrast, another Arabic daily Al Dustour Friday described Friday's meeting in Geneva between Foreign Minister Taher Al Masri and his American counterpart James Baker as an important step in the course of Baker's tour to revive the peace efforts. The paper said that the Masri-Baker meeting reflects Washington's recognition of the Jordanian role in the peace-making process following several attempts to overlook such role. The Geneva meeting, the paper noted, represents a good chance for Jordan to sound out America's ideas with regard to the future of the region and to submit Jordan's views anew. Jordan will continue to remain open-minded and to deal with all ideas with objectivity with the purpose of helping the process of implementing international legitimacy that can end the Arab-Israeli conflict, the paper said. At the same time, said the daily, Jordan will continue to adhere to U.N. Security Council resolutions concerning the Middle East question because these resolutions represent the world community's ideas for settling the dispute. Therefore, it said, any deviation from Security Council resolution should be considered as unacceptable and there can be no alternative to an international conference to implement all the terms of these resolutions.

ATLANTA — There is a general hope, if not belief, that this post-Gulf war period might be a propitious time for resolving the basic Israeli-Palestinian issues. I share this hope as, apparently, do Secretary of State James Baker and President George Bush.

One necessary but missing ingredient during the last 10 years has been a coherent and persistent effort by top U.S. officials to seek peace between Israel and her neighbours. Under Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford and myself, with Secretaries of State Henry Kissinger, Cyrus Vance and Ed Muskie, everyone knew that this issue always occupied a high place on the American foreign policy agenda. Since then, preoccupation with El Salvador, Grenada, Nicaragua, Panama and the rapidly changing events brought about by Mikhail Gorbachev in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe have often pushed basic Middle East issues aside.

Another prerequisite for success is the direct involvement of the people most responsible for the next step toward peace. The Camp David accords and the subsequent Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty were realized because we dealt with the two powers involved, Egypt and Israel. The United States was considered to be both fair in its approach and concerned about the interests of both sides.

Whether or not the president and the secretary of state will stay personally involved in spite of the inevitable delays, disappointments and political repercussions remains to be seen. It is clear, however, that the United States is not going to deal directly with the broader Palestinian community. This can be set aside for a time. Until the PLO revokes the clauses in its charter that call

Hope on the Israeli-Palestinian front

By Jimmy Carter

for Israel's destruction, its leaders cannot play a direct role in the unfolding diplomatic process.

It is encouraging that Secretary Baker met with a delegation of Palestinians during his recent visit to Jerusalem and that the PLO sanctioned the meeting. This channel can fill a crucial need, as was indicated last year in the attempt to implement Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's initiative, which could have led to some progress in consummating a phase of the Camp David process. It is necessary for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza to negotiate, not only on transient issues like election procedures but also on more general issues that involve the interests of all Palestinians.

Israelis and Palestinians living under occupation are becoming increasingly alienated from each other. If addressed sensitively, Camp David principles (adopted officially by the Israeli Knesset and now accepted by many key Arab leaders) can be used to increase confidence and reduce animosity.

Palestinian leaders could call publicly for an end to intifada violence as their universities and schools are reopened and some genuine elements of autonomy are granted unilaterally to Palestinian communities. These latter suggestions have originated among prominent members of the Likud government. During the Camp David negotiations, it was Prime Minister Menachem Begin who strongly advocated

"full autonomy" for the Palestinians.

In addition to sustaining its own role in peace efforts, the United States should seek strong support from the U.N. Security Council in sensitive diplomacy and from wealthy Arab states in providing financial assistance to peaceful projects in the Palestinian community. Such major projects as those involving water, marketing of products, tourism, mining, job training and improved health, housing and education could provide common benefits to all those who live in the region.

Israelis, Palestinians and Arab neighbours need not fear attempts to reconcile differences. Opportunities should be grasped to let each side show good intentions. It must be

remembered that any conclusion of a peace effort must be unanimous, voluntary and clearly a victory for both sides. Maximalist demands do not have to be abandoned at the beginning of a negotiation process, but each step has to contain proof that each concession made is clearly exceeded by benefits to be derived.

These explorations can best be done in private, until some consensus is reached on a common approach. Public announcements of incremental steps or proposals almost guarantee incremental but firm rejection. If not completely successful in the immediate future, such good-faith efforts could contribute greatly to the alleviation of tension and the strengthening of moderate forces, particularly in Israel and the occupied territories. This would at least help lay a foundation for future progress.

The above article is reprinted from the International Herald Tribune under the same headline.

Kuwait is not working yet

By Shyam Bhatia

BEWARE the dangers of free Kuwait. Gunshots fill the air at night; gangs of well-heeled thugs roam the streets, terrifying local Palestinians and others suspected of collaboration; traffic lights do not work, and motorists hare down the wrong side of the six-lane highway at breakneck speed.

When the police force was revived after liberation, the police commander discovered his men had no uniforms. Obviously, there was no point in sending them out on patrol. The following week, it was said there were no patrol cars. After 150 Chevalier Caprices arrived from Saudi Arabia last week, the police commander complained there were no radios.

Last week, police officials announced the new cars (and their crews) would be mothballed because they required a change of engine oil every few months and there was no one in the force who understood how that should be done. There are still no policemen on the streets.

Kuwait is not working. Two "greasy spoons" have opened in Salmiya, but six weeks after the Iraqis were kicked out, there are still long queues outside the food shops, fresh water supplies are intermittent, electricity is unavailable in some parts of the city, and essential services are functioning on an emergency basis. The best hotel in town, where rooms are rented out at \$300, is unable to supply a box of matches for its guests.

It is not just law and order that concerns the traumatised families living in this oil-rich emirate. The rot starts at the top. Authority is vested in the emir, but day-to-day affairs are left in the hands of his cousin, Saad, who is both crown prince and prime minister. Even his supporters concede he is not the most dynamic of men. Foreigners who are charitable about him say he is a bit like Pooch Bear, with a Peter Sellers approach to politics, without the humour.

He is the man who makes the vital decisions that affect the lives of the subjects. Recently, he authorised the Kuwaiti army to search Palestinian homes in the Hawali district for hidden weapons. The search was called off at the last moment, but only after the forceful intervention of the U.S. ambassador and senior military officers.

This hitherto unrevealed example of political ineptitude also

illustrates the widening gap between the nominal powers-that-be and American advisers.

Highly-placed American officials admit to a growing sense of frustration at what they and Kuwaitis at large perceive as inconsistency, sheer bloody-mindedness, penny-pinching and negligence.

Few Kuwaitis realise how close they were to starvation when, a few weeks before the country was freed, the emir had still not signed a cheque for the food and fresh water supplies being stockpiled in Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia. Action was forthcoming only when the U.S. ambassador intervened.

He told the crown prince: "Fine, we're prepared to let you let 10,000 people die of starvation. It's up to you. We can only advise you, we can't do it for you."

Later it was the Americans — not the Kuwaitis — who supervised the thousands of tonnes of "push packages" that were loaded on to Kuwait-bound lorries.

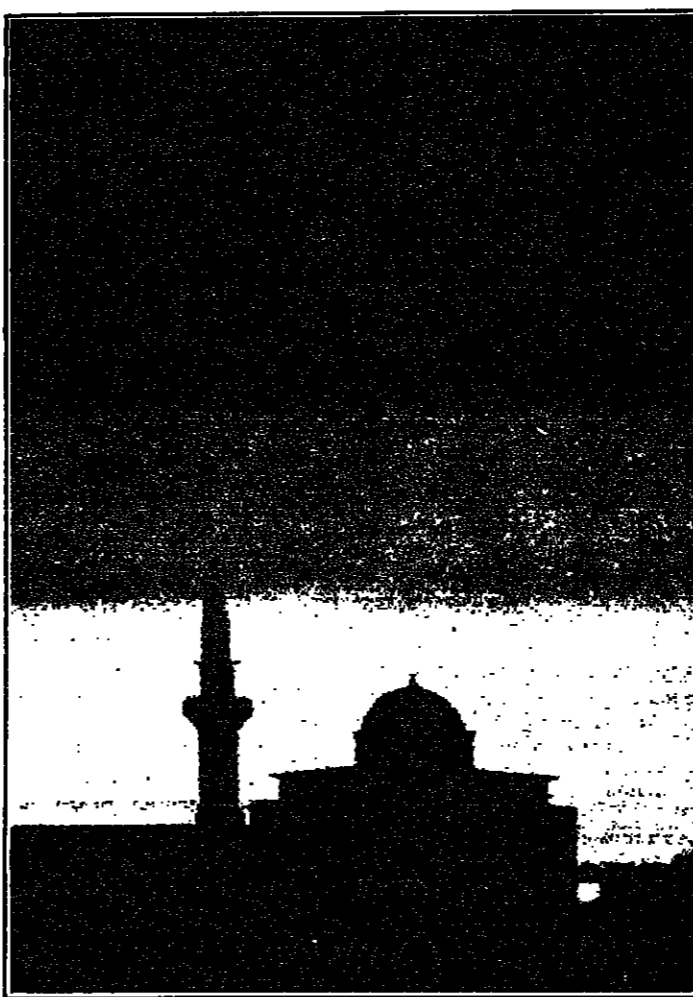
Each package contained water, medicine and seven basic food items — rice, flour, tomato paste, cooking oil, lentils and sugar. Within a week of entering Kuwait, the food was made available through government co-operatives; it was the least that could be done for a population that had lost the means to support itself.

Evidence of royal tight-fistedness surfaces as early as the end of last December. The Americans were concerned Saddam Hussein would carry out his threat to burn the oilfields. The emir was urged to sign a contract with oil fire-fighter Red Adair. Prompt action was required because, it was pointed out, it would take eight weeks to order specialised equipment.

The emir refused to sign. He did not want to pay anything that would have amounted to a retainer fee for Adair and his crew.

And so it took an extra six weeks to get the fire-fighters into position. The Kuwaitis estimate the fires are costing them \$100 million a day.

Last October, the Kuwaiti ambassador in Washington wrote to President George Bush to ask for help in the reconstruction of the country. Mr. Bush responded by setting up a task force. It was assumed the task force would run



Heart of darkness: Black cloud from burning oil fields in Kuwait

emergency services to begin with but, as an American source explained: "We try as much as possible not to do anything ourselves. It's really a whisper in the ear. You get the right people together and try to make it happen."

At their offices in Washington, members of the task force drew up worst-case scenarios of what they would find in Kuwait after the war. They predicted total destruction, and drew up plans for every government department. It was hard work, but harder still to interest Kuwaiti officials working out of their nearby embassy.

The result was that by the middle of last January, the Americans had an operational plan for running the country for the first 90 days after the Iraqi departure.

But there was no response whatsoever from the Kuwaitis, so there could be no start to vital projects, because the emir had not approved the expenditure in-

volved. By mid-January only three or four contracts had been signed. Another 300 were signed in February, but only because the task force was in Saudi Arabia by then and was better able to push action. The delay in making decisions has pushed local issues to the point of crisis, which confuses the Americans and makes it more difficult for them to plan their departure.

Some Americans suspect the emir would like them to stay to run the country, like General MacArthur ran Japan after the World War II, although this has been firmly ruled out. The Americans argue they do not have the resources to do so, and are anxious not to get bogged down in a foreign country where they could become a focus of resentment.

The American dilemma was summed up in the debate about internal security. The task force recommended that the military be withdrawn from the streets and replaced with a security force

trained to handle civil unrest. Agreement was reached in principle, but in practice the job of maintaining law and order was left to soldiers, some of whom were given only a week's training for civil duties. "Thank God these people are, frankly, passive," one American said. "In most parts of the world you give a young kid a gun and put him out there with that kind of power, and bingo, a riot. In a lot of parts of the world you give them that kind of power and they have an incentive to use it."

The same paralysis in decision-making has meant that prisoners in Kuwaiti jails have to endure intolerable living conditions because no one is willing to take the responsibility of moving them to temporary quarters until the new jail is ready. The result is that 475 Palestinians, Sudanese and other suspects have been crammed into a building near the military hospital which can sensibly accommodate fewer than 100.

Some of the delays can be explained by sheer incompetence or laziness. Last month the Ministry of Interior asked the American Air Force if it could use their giant Galaxy C5 aircraft to transport computers to Kuwait City. When the Americans said it would be cheaper and quicker if they used their own fleet of Boeing 747s, the Kuwaitis explained that the unloading equipment for the Boeings had been stolen by the Iraqis.

A few days later, an American officer visiting Kuwait International Airport was told by airline officials that the unloading equipment had been recovered and Kuwaiti cargo planes were ready to fly to any destination. The good news was passed to the relevant official at the Ministry of Interior, who telephoned the American embassy to ask: "How do I contact Kuwait Airways?"

It is not just the Americans who throw up their hands in frustration. During the occupation, the local resistance became experts at food distribution, rubbish disposal and essential maintenance to keep the electricity and water supplies flowing. Yet, just one day after liberation, food disappeared from the shops, rubbish piled up on the streets, water and electricity were cut.

To be fair, the Iraqis sabotaged the electricity plants, but the key issue was the return of the "outsiders." They set up new committees that took days to reach

agreement on issues such as repairing the transmission lines or bread quotas for families.

As bread stocks piled up, Kuwaitis were obliged to queue for hours outside bakeries, because security guards insisted on the minute inspection of every identity card. One guard explained: "Some people can't be trusted. They keep coming back for extra bread, which they sell on the black market."

The chronic incompetence has encouraged the opposition to band together and demand fundamental political reforms. Naseries have joined hands with Muslim fundamentalists to insist on a return to parliamentary democracy and the freedoms guaranteed by the 1962 constitution.

Sadly, as the opposition has discovered, the royal family cannot be relied on to honour the commitment to political change. Despite specific promises made in Taif and subsequently repeated, parliamentary democracy and a return to constitutional rule is the least attractive option as far as the emir is concerned. "We have to have something better than parliament," the crown prince told local Kuwaitis last month. "Ask them ever do in parliament is attack the ministers."

American thinking on the issue is exactly the opposite. "Allowing the democratic process to start is the only way they can save themselves," says an American official.

Lined up against the American preference are the views of the Saudis and other Arab neighbours. They fear democratic reforms in Kuwait would have a domino effect and lead to similar demands within their own countries.

Much will depend on what the Kuwaitis themselves are able to achieve. Amid the clutter of the Dasman Palace, there was a ray of hope last week in the shape of the emir's younger sister, who had stayed behind during the occupation.

She surprised palace guards by arriving unescorted one morning, dressed in jeans and her favourite polo T-shirt. Sheikha Asmal kicked aside the discarded Harrods cartons and faded velvet jewellery boxes left behind by the Iraqis, and, amid clouds of dust, started cleaning up her brother's bedroom. As she explained, she just wanted to get on with the job — The Observer.

Where is superman Bush when Arabs and Israelis need him?

By Leslie H. Gelb

NEW YORK — The wrongman, James Baker, has flown off to the Middle East because the right man, George Bush, is not nearly ready to go. Secretary of State Baker does not have the clout to break down the granite-like stalemate between Arabs and Israelis. President Bush might have it.

Mr. Bush is the most feared U.S. president ever in Israel, and the most admired ever among Arabs. The Israelis know that he does not need Jewish support for re-election. The Arabs know that they owe him for defeating Iraq.

After his triumph in the Gulf war, Mr. Bush must feel like Superman. But he lied immobilized, like Gulliver, bound by his dream of Middle East Lilliputians capable of sapping all his powers. He appears to be afraid of putting his enormous political capital, and himself, at any risk—even though all his aides say he is convinced that the moment to strike for peace is now.

In a way, Mr. Bush is as much a victim of his Middle

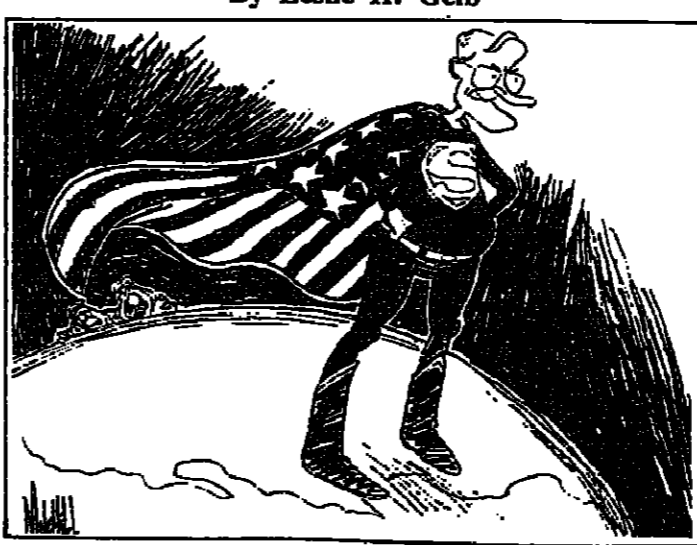
East negotiating strategy as of his political caution. That strategy posits two tracks.

Track One asks for confidence-building measures between Arab states and Israel; for example, the Arabs lift their economic boycott against Israel, and Israel reopens Palestinian universities. Track Two seeks Israeli-Palestinian talks, with the goal of trading Israeli-occupied land for peace.

The strategy looks like the old and sound incrementalist plan. But it is, in essence, a micro-incrementalist approach. It calls for tiny steps, and such steps will take a lot of time to produce momentum. By then, Mr. Bush's victory toga will be frayed.

Strategy is at odds with power. Mr. Bush's power is at its peak, but the strategy does not call on him to use it until later, perhaps long after the "moment of opportunity" has passed.

Nonetheless, guided by this strategy, Mr. Bush dispatched Mr. Baker to the Middle East a month ago, armed with ques-



tions to test the strategy. The secretary returned with the good news that all the parties saw the war's aftermath as an "opportunity" for peace.

The White House soon put out the word that Mr. Bush would don his Superman cape and fly to the Middle East. Then he realized that no one actually had given Mr. Baker

even a modest concrete concession.

It began to dawn on the White House that possibly the war had not altered Arab-Israeli animosity. Perhaps officials also sensed that Mr. Bush's hero's lap around the region might become an embarrassing procession of questions about Arab-Israeli

negotiations.

So White House officials shelved the tour and waited for the Arabs and Israelis to answer the Baker questions. And they waited. And they received Middle East visitors. And, whatever these visitors said privately, their leaders back home were hardening their public positions.

"There is clearly a danger of losing the moment," a key administration official opined. "If we don't get action soon, the Middle East states will revert to form."

Thus was conceived the present Baker journey. Margaret Tutwiler, the State Department spokeswoman, launched it with these uplifting words: "So I would, if I was going to characterise it, say this is yet another step in his step-by-step process."

Administration officials are guarding the contents of Mr. Baker's brief with titillating discretion. Here is all they will say: He will press for answer to his earlier questions. He might sketch out some sort of region-

al conference to trigger bilateral Arab-Israeli talks. He will not put pressure on anyone. He will have some ideas about "trade-offs" and possible "U.S. guarantees of settlements." He will speak about Mr. Bush's commitment and impatience.

As for now, however, Mr. Bush will remain firmly planted in the far background. His advisers agree that Mr. Baker must first line up the pieces of peace before the president is wheeled into action. "We have to have a better sense if talks will work before taking them to the next level," a key official explained.

Maybe. But the 1978 peace between Israel and Egypt points to the opposite course of action. Jimmy Carter, generally no great shakes as a leader, knew what to do then. He took the talks right up to his level and put himself directly on the firing line at Camp David. This remains the only successful model for a Middle East peace — International Herald Tribune.

Masri

(Continued from page 1)

"The United States and the European Community will combine their efforts to help those unfortunate people," said Mr. Poos, whose country currently chairs the EC.

Mr. Baker also outlined plans for a Middle East conference. "It's difficult to divulge details in this pre-negotiation phase but we have not detected differences between the EC and U.S. approaches," Mr. Poos said.

Gulf force

(Continued from page 1)

everyone has their own brilliant ideas for making the text more deathless," one U.S. official quoted by Reuters said.

Mr. Anbari said Iraq, with 6,000 years of civilisation, had a "bright future" but that ties to Kuwait depended on the "other side as well."

But he said that the Security Council in Resolution 687, adopted on April 3, had exceeded its authority under international law in interfering in Iraq affairs and its squabbling over the letter written to him was unnecessary. He said the council was dominated by the United States, which has "not exactly" a friend of Iraq.

About 32 nations have volunteered to contribute manpower for patrolling the 200-kilometres long border between Iraq and Kuwait.

The ceasefire is an unusual one as U.S. forces are still in southern Iraq. The Bush administration warned Iraq Wednesday not to carry out any military activity against Kurds in northern Iraq.

Aziz

(Continued from page 1)

rights and were treated with respect. He said that Iraq would solve the problems with the Kurds based on democratic principles.

Referring to the refugee problem, he said that foreign countries were trying to create a problem and justify their interference in Iraq's internal affairs. "At present, the Iraqi government is supplying the people in the north with basic needs and appealing to the refugees to return to their towns and villages," Mr. Aziz said.

Referring to relations with Arab countries, Mr. Aziz said Iraq welcomed a move towards opening a new chapter with other Arab countries. Such relations, he added, should be founded on firm and solid basis and on the charter of the Arab League and the resolutions of the various Arab summit meetings.

Earlier Mr. Aziz met with Foreign Minister Taher Al Masri to review the general situation in the Arab region and inter-Arab relations.

Syria

(Continued from page 1)

Washington would do to implement U.N. resolutions 242 and 338, replied:

"The best formula for those resolutions, which create really a framework for negotiations, is for the parties to at long last sit down and directly negotiate their differences."

Mr. Baker said the aim of the

Post-war optimism fading among Americans — poll

WASHINGTON (AP) — Optimism that swept over Americans following the allied triumph in the Gulf is beginning to fade, according to a poll published in Friday editions of the Washington Post.

Concern over the economy and other domestic problems overshadowed by the war with Iraq are resurfacing, the poll showed. Fifty-one per cent of those questioned said the country is "pretty seriously off on the wrong track," up from 39 per cent in a late February in the first flush of victory over Iraq.

Forty-two per cent of those questioned said the country was moving in the "right direction," down from 58 per cent.

The wrong track-right direction question is one frequently used to gauge how Americans view the

country's well being.

In the poll, 1,000 randomly selected adults 18 or older were interviewed by telephone April 5-9. The margin of uncertainty was three percentage points either way.

The poll found President George Bush's popularity off somewhat, although still extraordinarily high. Among those questioned 78 per cent said they approved of the job Mr. Bush was doing, down from 90 per cent at war's end.

Mr. Bush's approval rating in the poll puts him back to about where he stood in January, before the fighting got under way.

Forty-nine per cent said the economy was getting worse while 18 per cent said it was improving and 31 per cent said it was staying the same.

conference was to end the Arab-Israeli conflict and that the name or shape of the forum was not important.

"We both agreed there was a window of opportunity here to move the peace process forward and we should try not to miss that window," Mr. Baker said.

U.S. plans

(Continued from page 1)

Major proposed earlier this week that an enclave be established for the Kurds within Iraq.

Mr. Churkin said the Soviet Union, home to 152,000 Kurds, was concerned about the status of an enclave.

"The creation on Iraq's territory of enclaves for Kurdish refugees will put the Security Council in an awkward situation of determining the borders and legal status of such a zone," Mr. Churkin said.

Iran said Friday more than a million Iraqi refugees had crossed its borders.

President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani accused the West of ignoring the refugees' plight after provoking the rebellions.

Reports from the mountainous border region, where heavy rain has made conditions even harsher for refugees, spoke of more than 20,000 Iraqis daily, with only third of them being supplied with shelter.

"You (Iraq) are mistaken. We are really not interfering in Iraqi affairs," Mr. Rafsanjani told a weekly prayer meeting at Tehran University.

"It is true that oppressed Iraqis who are in Iran have crossed the 1,200 kilometres border and launched a campaign against you. But we are responsible for this. We are not responsible for protecting your borders."

Iran has repeatedly denied Baghdad's charges that it sent saboteurs across the border to rebel.

But the main Iranian opposition group said Mr. Rafsanjani "blatantly admitted the mullahs' regime's interference in Iraqi territory." "For the past month, Rafsanjani has been personally directing the infiltration and attacks into Iraqi territory, and for this purpose, March 13-16 he stayed at the Revolutionary Guards' Ramazan operational garrison in Kermanshah," the Mujahadeen-e-Khalq said in a statement Friday.

"During the Friday prayers, Rafsanjani claimed that the in-

filtration was limited to 'Iraqi oppositionists'. In a bid to cover up the Pasdaran's attacks on garrisons of the national liberation army of Iran, he repeated that it was the Mujahadeen who had crossed the Iran-Iraq border," it said.

"Rafsanjani is confessing when there can be no doubt, after April 1, about the (Tehran) regime's extensive military interference in Iraqi territory to suppress the Mujahadeen and efforts to set up an Islamic regime in Iraq," it said.

Iran and Iraq each harboured opponents of the other during their 1980-1988 war. Iranian Revolutionary Guards trained and organised Iraqi dissidents.

Mubarak

(Continued from page 1)

chaired by the United States and attended by the Soviet Union, Israel and Arab states.

Mr. Mubarak said Thursday the Arabs should get together, put the divisions of the Gulf crisis behind them and act in unison to solve huge new problems it created.

Iraq's invasion of Kuwait last August was "an Arab nuclear explosion at the political level," Mr. Mubarak said Thursday night, and a new spirit of conciliation is necessary to survive the fallout.

"This post-ordeal stage requires a complete review leading to a plan for collective Arab action," he said at a religious rally. "This should avoid the pitfalls of the past, prevent a recurrence of mistakes and lead to a bright future in which our (Arab) Nation would lead the free and dignified life it deserves."

Egypt led Arab opposition to the Kuwait invasion. Mr. Mubarak sent 38,500 troops to the Gulf region to join the U.S.-led military coalition against Iraq. The six-week war ended on Feb. 28.

"The evildoer should be punished to the extent of the evil he committed," Mr. Mubarak said, referring to Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

He did not say how this could be done but said in meeting out measured punishment. "We should avoid sentiments of revenge, grudge and hatred, replacing all this with true brotherly love."

The president also called for greater democracy in the Arab countries, arguing that the Gulf crisis would not have occurred if there had been democracy in Iraq.

Hunger and desperation in southern Iraq

By Wafa Amr
The Associated Press

BASRA — War and rebellion have turned this city into a stinking hell.

Barefoot children fight through swarms of flies to collect water from muddy puddles rank with the decaying bodies of animals.

Mothers feed their babies starch for lack of milk.

one million people in 1980, was hammered by artillery during the 1980-88 war with Iran. It was pounded by allied bombs during the war for Kuwait, 40 kilometres south.

The remnants were devastated by fighting between the government and Shi'ite Muslim rebels that followed the Gulf war.

Troops have largely crushed the rebellion, although the rat-

"I was sitting at home when the insurgents forced their way in," said a 16-year-old named Hussein. "They raped my sister and mother, killed my father and then killed my mother. 'I ran for my life but was shot in the leg,' he said. Majida Mustafa, mother of a hospitalised two-month-old child, said her family had eaten only rice during the three weeks Basra was controlled by rebels. "We had rice for breakfast, lunch and dinner," she said.

Patients are dying undiagnosed and almost untreated in hospitals shattered by shell-fire and stripped of their medicine during Iraq's month-long civil war.

The city Western reporters visited this week bore little resemblance to "the Venice of the Middle East" that was Basra a decade back.

The port city, which held

tle of gunfire could still be heard in the distance and both soldiers and residents said the area remained unsafe.

"Adults and children have died and are still dying from severe malnutrition and diseases we cannot confirm (diagnose) because of the lack of equipment and medicine," said Dr. Saleh Bakos of Al Tahrir Hospital.

Doctors said Al Tahrir, riddled with bullets inside and out, was the only functioning hospital in town.

"During the last two weeks, five babies less than eight months old have died here," said Dr. Bakos.

Dr. Mohammad Jasssem said the facility was receiving about two dozen patients daily suffering from severe dehydration or other critical conditions.

Dr. Bakos accused the rebels of looting the hospital's stores, destroying its equipment, stealing or burning its ambulances and expelling its patients.

Reporters, visiting after the fighting had ended, were unable to confirm how the damage had been caused.

The streets of the city were littered with the striking bodies of dead animals, some gnawed by packs of roving dogs and swarmed by flies and mosquitos.

Women and children collected water from the nearby Shatt Al Arab waterway, carrying 2,800 kilometres of upstream pollution, or from muddy puddles — some fouled with the bodies of animals.

"We don't care if the water is clean. We need water and this is what we have," said a 15-year-old boy, who gave his name as Hussein.

Residents said municipal water supplies ended with allied bombing on Jan. 17. Government food deliveries stopped during last month's rebellion, leaving residents to rely on the black market.

"If food products are found in the black market, the prices are usually very high. We cannot afford to buy it and feed our children," said Samira Hussein, a mother of four whose husband is missing on the Gulf war front.

At the black market, vendors were sold tomatoes and cucumbers scattered on the dirt in front of them under a blanket of insects. The odor of dirt and dead animals filled the air.

"I have received no money for two and a half months so we ate from our food stock that we stored before the war, and this has finished," said one Basra woman, Hamida Muhammad.

She said she can now feed her children only once each two days.

I begged my neighbours for starch and mixed it with water as a substitute for milk," she said.

Another Basra woman said she sent children to beg in the streets, while gathered water and took her infant, suspect of having cholera, to the hospital.

Some patients there told of rebel atrocities.

"I was sitting at home when the insurgents forced their way in," said a 16-year-old named Hussein. "They raped my sister and mother, killed my father and then killed my mother."

"I ran for my life but was shot in the leg," he said. Majida Mustafa, mother of a hospitalised two-month-old child, said her family had eaten only rice during the three weeks Basra was controlled by rebels.

"We had rice for breakfast, lunch and dinner," she said.

Her family of 11 had taken two weeks to go through a 50-kilogramme bag of rice which had cost 350 dinars (\$1.120 at the official rate, but less than \$7.00 at the free market value of the dinar).

Reporters saw heavy damage to several mosques. The Al Adila Mosque, which had been a rebel headquarters, was almost demolished by shell-fire.

"The opposition thought they would be safe in the mosques, so they shot at the army from inside the mosques," said Hui Nami.

He said many students at first joined the rebels, but the massacres and suffering of the people inflicted by the opposition held them back.

Rebel Yeltsin poses major challenges to Gorbachev

By Ron Popeski
Reuters

MOSCOW — Boris Yeltsin, combative leader of the Russian Federation, has overcome repeated setbacks to enhance his reputation with an adoring public and confront the Kremlin over what he sees as a swing back to conservatism.

In his latest tactical victory, Yeltsin secured broad powers from the Russian parliament to deal with his republic's economic morass. The session was initially called by hardliners seeking his removal.

He also won agreement to stage a June election to an executive presidency — a contest he is almost certain to win — which would give him an unprecedented power base to take on Mikhail Gorbachev's Kremlin.

Once the protégé of the Soviet president, Yeltsin has waged a fierce battle against official policy since his election from the Communist Party Politburo in 1983.

Last February, he demanded Gorbachev's resignation.

In less than a year since the Russian parliament elected him as its chairman of a scant four votes, Yeltsin has blazed a trail against any return to conservative policies.

Unrelenting barbs by the Communist press and top officials, including Gorbachev himself, served only to bolster Yeltsin's reputation as the champion of the long-suffering Soviet workers.

He stormed out of last July's key Communist Party congress,

abandoning his membership along with a group of radicals.

Less than a month later, he and Gorbachev appeared to come to an agreement on putting the ailing economy on a fast-track "500-day" plan to introduce market economics.

That consensus was fleeting and Yeltsin was soon back on the offensive against Gorbachev's retreat into a more cautious approach to overturning seven decades of command economics.

He then turned his attention to putting teeth into a "sovereignty declaration" issued last summer to prise Russian control over its vast natural resources away from the centre.

When Gorbachev held a referendum last month on the future of the Soviet Union as a "renewed federation," Yeltsin staged his own vote on the executive presidency and won a handsome 70 per cent support.

In January, he defied the Kremlin by flying straight to Estonia to strike cooperation deals with the Baltic republics the day after 14 people were killed in confrontations with troops outside Lithuania's main television tower.

Yeltsin became the Soviet Union's most popular politician with his drive to hasten the pace of reform, for which he was sacked from the junior ranks of the party Politburo.

He bounced back in parliamentary elections in March 1989, taking 89 per cent of the Moscow vote to win the country's largest grassroots mandate in its first



multi-candidate elections.

Seven months later Yeltsin was held up to public ridicule when Soviet leaders accused him of seeking to boost his popularity by telling police someone had tried to kill him by pushing him into the Moscow River.

Yeltsin said Gorbachev was trying to purge him from public life by allowing the incident to be raised in parliament.

He made another comeback in March 1990, defeating 11 other candidates to win a seat for the Urals industrial city of Sverdlovsk in the assembly of Russian Federation.

In a bitterly critical book, Yeltsin charted his often tormented relationship with Gorbachev, a

man he called "my perpetual opponent, the lover of half-measures."

Gorbachev plucked Yeltsin from Sverdlovsk in 1985 and brought him to Moscow to help to push his new "perestroika" policies and root out rampant corruption in the party machinery.

As Moscow party chief, Yeltsin tackled food shortages, overcrowding and bureaucratic bungling to win repute as one of the men most closely in tune with Gorbachev's reforming spirit.

He was fired from the Moscow job at a meeting of the policy-making central committee in November 1987 after he complained that the party's echelons

were not pursuing reform vigorously enough.

Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin was born on Feb. 1, 1931, into a Ural mountain peasant family at a time when dictator Josef Stalin was forcing the collectivization of farms and transporting thousands of wealthier farmers to Siberia.

He grew up in Sverdlovsk, studying at the Urals Polytechnic Institute, and graduated as a construction engineer in 1955, joining the party in 1961.

Local party chief from 1967 to 1985, he joined the party central committee as a full member in 1981. He has a wife, Naya, two daughters, two grand-daughters and a grandson.

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Sports

Sabatini breezes to victory in third-round Florida match

AMELIA ISLAND, Florida (R) — American Luanne Spadea became another of second seeded Gabriela Sabatini's victims in a 6-0, 6-1 third-round match at the \$350,000 Bausch and Lomb Championships.

Third-seeded Arantxa Sanchez Vicario moved into the quarter-finals with a 6-3, 6-1 victory over American Halle Cioffi and fourth-seeded Zina Garrison beat Greece's Angeliki Kanellopoulou 6-2, 6-4.

The fourth-ranked Sabatini can be considered the toughest tennis player in the world. She barely makes any errors which leaves her opponents little opportunity to challenge.

"In the match I felt pretty good, but I have a little cold," Sabatini said. "I'm pretty satisfied with the way I played."

If Sabatini reaches the final and gets the right combination of computer bonus points, which are based on the rankings of her opponents, she could displace Martina Navratilova and become

the number three player in the world. If this occurs, it will be the first time Navratilova's been out of the top three since 1977.

Quarterfinal pairings pit top-seeded Steffi Graf against sixth-seeded Natalia Zvereva, Sabatini against fifth-seeded Helena Sukova, Sanchez Vicario against seventh-seeded Leila Meskhi and Garrison against American Patty Fendick.

Sabatini comes on court with no doubts — she believes she can win and her game doesn't let her down.

She raced to a 10-game winning streak — losing three points in five service games. A few mistakes by Sabatini finally led the 243rd-ranked Spadea hold her serve in the 11th game.

Sabatini struggled to hold her own serve in the 16 point, 12th game — that's when Spadea had her only break point in the match. The Argentinian broke Spadea at 30-40 in the final game when the American hit a back-

hand wide.

"She started putting pressure on me in that (11th) game," Sabatini said. "She started to come to the net. She played better in that game."

The fifth-ranked Sanchez Vicario is a baseline expert, venturing to the net occasionally and only when it's a sure-kill.

Sanchez Vicario broke the 77th-ranked Cioffi's serve at 15-40 in the fifth game of the first set.

In the second set, Sanchez Vicario cruised to a 3-0 lead until Cioffi held her serve in the fourth game.

At her own admission, the eighth-ranked Garrison is not a natural to play court surfaces, although she won this title back in 1985. Her wins here are not easy, but she's managing to pull them out.

"If I ever win a match easy on this stuff it would kill me," admitted Garrison.

The 72nd-ranked Fendick is

shocked by her advancement into the quarterfinals — she beat Brenda Schultz 6-3, 6-4.

"I have no clue what I'm doing," said Fendick, who is playing her first clay court event in eight years. "I have no explanation, but I love it. I'm having a blast."

"I think about each match. I don't look ahead," said Sabatini, who stayed on course for a possible showdown with Graf for the title.

"I hope to play her in the final," she added. "But, of course, I have to keep winning."

"I think it's going to be a very good match," said Sanchez Vicario, who has reached the final of one tournament and the semifinals of two others this year, but is still seeking her first title.

"I know (Meskhi's) playing well and beat some good players (last week), so it will be tough," she added. "But I think I'm playing well, too. We'll see what happens."

Clough looks to end F.A. Cup jinx

LONDON (R) — Nottingham Forest Manager Brian Clough is hoping to bury his F.A. Cup jinx when he leads his team into their third semifinal in four seasons Sunday.

Forest, who meet second division leaders West Ham, are desperate to avoid a repeat of the defeats suffered in 1988 and 1989 and take Clough to his first F.A. Cup final in a glittering 25-year managerial career.

The F.A. Cup has always remained tantalisingly out of reach for Clough, who has managed league championship and League Cup winning sides and twice led Forest to success in the European Cup.

"I'm taking nothing for granted against West Ham."

"I would assume that with West Ham being top of the second division and us being in the bottom half of the first division, we are about on par," he said.

Forest's midweek win over

Derby was only their second league victory in 13 games and lifted them to 12th in the table.

Clough, 56, has said he is ashamed of Forest's league position but he is typically scornful of the high, long ball tactics many first division teams now employ.

"We don't play in the clouds. If God wanted us to play football in the clouds he'd have put grass there," he said.

Forest, who have played eight games en route to the last four, may recall England midfielder Steve Hodge and young striker Nigel Jenkinson for the tie at Birmingham's Villa Park.

Hodge has missed nine games with a knee injury while Jenkinson has been out with a damaged ankle. Both played in a reserve game this week.

Their opponents West Ham, virtually certain to return to the first division next season, will be without several first-choice defenders.

Injuries to Julian Dicks, Alvin

Martin and Tim Breacker could allow 31-year-old Scottish international Ray Stewart a return to the big stage.

Stewart, who won an F.A. Cup winners' medal with West Ham in 1980, played his first league game for more than two years this week after finally shaking off a series of injuries.

Arsenal Manager George Graham fears mercurial Tottenham midfielder Paul Gascoigne could destroy his side's hopes of an unprecedented second double when the north London rivals meet in the other semifinal at Wembley Sunday.

Gascoigne returned to first team action Wednesday just four weeks after a hernia operation and is certain to play against Arsenal.

"When he (Gascoigne) went in

for the operation I didn't think he could get fit in time, but he is looking good — full of running," Graham said.

"We will have to think again about our approach. He is a unique talent in England and we will give him a lot of respect."

Young Arsenal midfielder David Hillier, a candidate to mark Gascoigne, is struggling for fitness after suffering a badly gashed leg in the 1-1 draw at Southampton Tuesday.

Arsenal are eight points clear of Liverpool in the league and look set fair for the title — the part of the double they previously won 20 years ago.

Liverpool, who have a game in hand, travel to fourth-placed Leeds Saturday having collected just one point from their last three games.

IOC to debate timing of S. Africa's Olympic return

BARCELONA (R) — Having opened the door to South Africa, Olympic leaders meet in Barcelona next week to discuss when the republic should be ushered over the threshold.

South Africa already has one foot in the door after being granted conditional recognition by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in March.

The country has six months in which to meet the IOC's requirements for a full return to the Olympic movement from which it was expelled in 1970 because of its apartheid policies.

One of the key conditions is the scrapping of apartheid laws which reformist President F.W. de Klerk has promised by June.

when the Olympic governing body holds its annual meeting in Birmingham, England.

The 11-member IOC executive board will begin a four-day meeting Sunday in Barcelona, host city of next year's summer Olympics, at which South Africa will be the main issue.

The executive board will discuss the report of an IOC delegation which granted conditional recognition at the end of an historic visit to the republic last month.

Few within the Olympic movement seriously doubt that a Springbok team will take part in the games next year for the first time since 1960.



Boris Becker

Bruguera upsets Becker

BARCELONA (AP) — Sergi Bruguera of Spain upset top-seeded Boris Becker of Germany 6-2, 6-4 in the third round of the Conde de Godo Tennis Tournament.

Bruguera, seeded 15th, is the current Spanish champion and won the Estoril Open in Portugal last week.

Becker said Wednesday he was participating in the tournament to get some practice on clay before next month's French Open.

Bruguera is ranked 21st on the ATP Tour computer while Becker is second.

Becker struggled visibly, committing 28 unforced errors, hitting only 43 per cent of his first serves and allowing Bruguera to rally from 15-14 in the final game.

A pair of errant backhands by

Becker at deuce gave Bruguera the match.

"He's in good form, and I need to work more," Becker said. "It's only the start for me on clay. I need a couple more days of work to be in good form. I hit good shots and bad shots today, but a few too many where bad."

The 20-year-old Bruguera was buoyed by last week's victory, but is hoping to win in Barcelona, where he was born and resides.

"It's always nice to win a tournament, but to win this one here in Barcelona is much better," Bruguera said. "I must concentrate if I am to have a chance."

Becker became the fourth of the top six seeds to lose, joining no. 2 Guy Forget, no. 5 Jonas Svensson and no. 6 Andre Gomez.

Edberg advances into last four in Japan Open

TOKYO (R) — Defending champion Stefan Edberg reached the semifinals of the Japan Open Tennis Championships when he beat Michael Stich 7-6 6-3 Friday.

The top-seeded Swede, bidding for a third successive title here, was fully stretched by the German in the first set before eventually winning the tie break 7-5.

The German Davis Cup player, ranked 19th in the world, initially took the game to Edberg, using his powerful service to good effect with a series of aces.

But Edberg won the second set comfortably as Stich made a number of unforced errors.

Edberg's semifinal opponent will be fifth seed American Michael Chang, who defeated Wimbledon champion Pat Cash, the 14th seed, 6-4 6-1.

Second seed Ivan Lendl also made his way into the semifinal, demolishing eighth seed Jakob Hlasek of Switzerland 6-1 6-4 in 72 minutes.

He takes on fourth seed Jim Courier in Saturday's other semifinal. Courier coasted to a comfortable 6-2 6-2 quarter-final victory over fellow American John McEnroe.

Hard-hitting Courier, who won two tournaments in successive weeks at home last month, was always too strong for an out of touch McEnroe.

Meanwhile, American Lori McNeil and Belgium's Sabine Appelmans cruised into the women's final of the Japan Open Tennis Championships with straight-sets wins Friday.

Villasana retains boxing title

MEXICO CITY (R) — Marcos Villasana of Mexico retained his World Boxing Council (WBC) featherweight boxing title when the referee stopped his fight against Colombian challenger Rafael Zuniga in the sixth round.

Villasana, 30, who dominated Zuniga throughout the fight, ended it with a punishing series of left and right hooks that slammed the fourth-ranking challenger

into the ropes where he stood defenseless.

American referee Vince Delgado stepped in to stop the contest after two minutes eight seconds of the sixth round.

"He has a very good left hand," the 27-year-old Zuniga said tearfully later. "That was what did me the most harm. He was stronger and better than I was."

Charles Goren dies

LOS ANGELES (R) — Charles Goren, acknowledged as the world's foremost authority on contract bridge, has died aged 90 at his home in California, his business manager said Thursday.

Goren, whose book, *Goren's Bridge Complete*, is known by players of the game simply as "Goren's Bible," was given the honorary title of "Mr. Bridge" by the American Contract Bridge League in 1969.

Tanner Hirsch, his business manager, said Goren died on April 3 in Encino, California, where he was living with a nephew. "The game has lost the best player it has ever had, or ever will have," Hirsch said.

He said Goren started playing contract bridge when he fell in love with a girl while studying law at McGill University in Montreal, Canada.

"The young lady played the game and he wanted to impress her, but at first he was a laughing stock, so he determined to study the game."

Goren gave up law in 1936 when his first book, *Winning Bridge Made Easy*, was published. More than 40 books followed. "History does not record what happened to the young lady in Montreal. Charles never married. He was married to the game," Hirsch said.

In the 1940s and 1950s Goren teamed up with another unlikely bridge player, former chorus girl Helen Sobel, to form "the most feared partnership in the world," said Hirsch.

Goren was named player of the year in the United States eight times. "It has never been done since and the likelihood is that the record will never be surpassed," Hirsch added.

Goren was a syndicated bridge columnist and had his own television show. He also had the distinction of being the only bridge authority to be featured on the cover of Time magazine.

His skills in bridge made him a sought-after partner by the rich and famous. Among those he played with were General Dwight Eisenhower, author Somerset Maugham, Humphrey Bogart and Chico Marx.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMMAM HIRSCH
1990 Tribune Media Services, Inc.

THE CASE OF THE VANISHING TRICK

Neither vulnerable. North deals.

NORTH

♠ J 7

♥ K 10 5 4 3

♦ K

♣ K Q 10 6 4

WEST

♠ Q

♥ 8 7 6

♦ 10 8 6 2

♣ A J 8 2

EAST

♠ K 4

♥ J 9

♦ Q J 9 7 5 4 3

♣ S J

SOUTH

♠ A 10 9 8 6 5 3 2

♥ A 2

♦ A

♣ 9 7

The bidding:

North East South West

1 ♠ 3 ♠ 3 ♠ 4 ♠

Pass Pass 6 ♠ 4 ♠

Pass Pass

Opening lead: Ace of ♠

At the World Olympiad in Geneva, Switzerland, two Australian

declarers proved it is not as easy for the defenders to collect "sure"

tricks as one might imagine. This deal came up in the Mixed Pair

Championship.

We have only the auction at one

table, but assume it followed similar

lines at the other. The problem

started when North chose to open

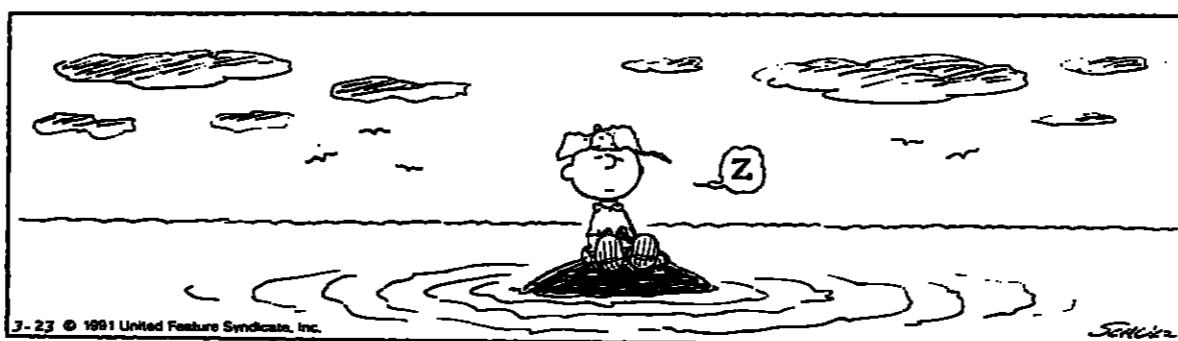
an aceless wonder in first seat, and it

is difficult to blame South for refusing to stay out of slam thereafter, since North rated to have some spade tolerance.

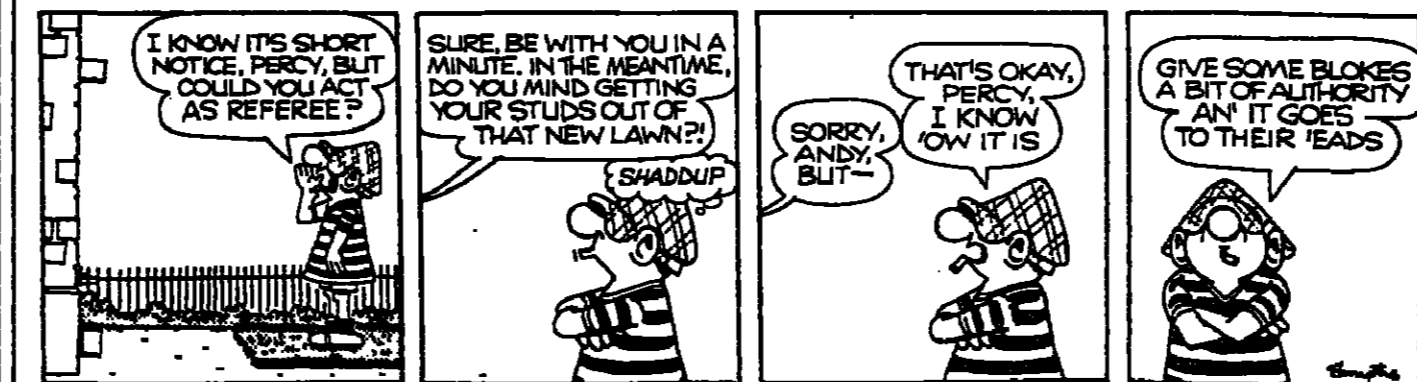
At one table West led the ace of clubs and then shifted to a diamond. It might seem declarer's chances of making the rest of the tricks are somewhat less than zero, but South enlisted the cooperation of the defense. After winning the ace of diamonds, declarer crossed to the king of clubs and led the queen. East elected to ruff. Unfortunately, East selected the four of trumps for this task. (A convincing argument can be made in favor of ruffing with the king; it would defeat the contract.) Declarer overruffed and banged out the ace of spades with highly satisfactory results.

At the other table declarer did even better! The lead there was a diamond, won perforce in the closed hand. South crossed to the king of hearts and tried the effect of leading the jack of trumps. East covered and great was the fall thereof. A club to the king won and, when declarer continued with a barrage of trumps, a flustered West discarded the ace of clubs to hold the guarded queen of hearts. As a result, declarer scored an overtrick!

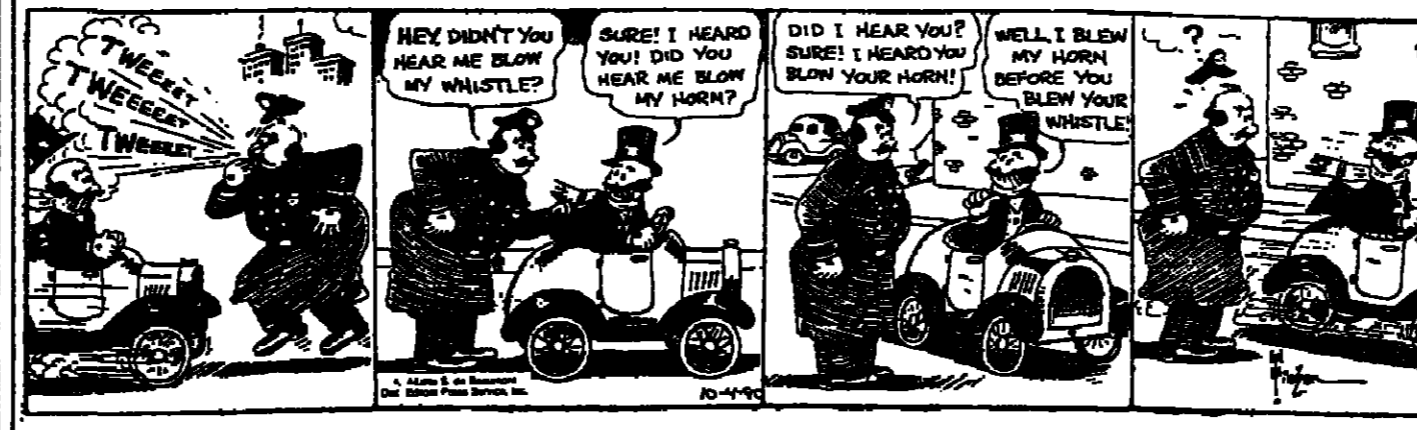
Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SATURDAY APRIL 13, 1991

Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: You will have a chance to rid yourself of an illness or tedious work which has been a pain in the neck currently. After the New Moon in Aries on the fourteenth things pick up.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Now you can have one of your happiest days in a long while so make a point to get off to places of amusement and pleasure and have a good time.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) There are many things that you could use at your own home to bring more harmony and accord there so sit down with your family and arrange new conditions.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) This is the time to show you are the one who does seek out and get companions in all walks of life to do the things that you would like them to do.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Whatever you would like to do that does necessitate having more of this world's goods is fine now so look for ways to add to your present income.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) A day to make sure that you do what you personally like the most so lose no time but get after those social outlets that bring you pleasure.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) There are a great many personal and intimate things for you to do now so get them behind you and then have a happy time with your love mate.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Your need for some highly social life now is great so use this

day to decide and to start action in

entertainments and being with chosen friends.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You have a good chance

now to get a very important person to get you what you want so this day can be a banner day by being with executives.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) So many interesting

expansions can now be yours that you would be wise to get off to the new sites that appeal to you and get benefits there.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Whatever you have in mind that does necessitate the payment of bills, money you owe or looking into ways to be more exact in fine today.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) You would certainly be wise to contact that broad minded and imaginative person whom you regard as a partner to settle old

plans and to get to new ideas.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) There are so many projects for you to do that not a moment of day should be wasted in just fussing around so get big, accomplish and achieve.

Today's child: If your child were born today she or he will have a deep-seated desire for reassurance and praise. Introducing the right individuals, books and concepts into this life is a very important

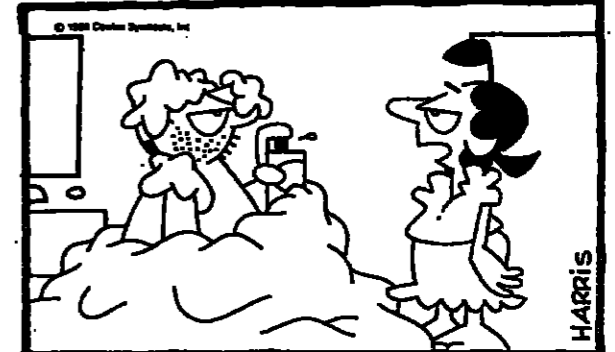
need if this sensitive child is to have a full measure of what this life has to offer.

"The stars impel, they do not

compel, what you make of your life is largely up to you."

THE BETTER HALF.

By Harris



"You should have yourself frozen until they discover a cure for stupidity."

JUMBLE.

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Henri Arnold and Bob Lee

Unscramble these four Jumbles one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

ROBOD

DUPON

CERTIM

NECCIS



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer: IT'S "FOUR"

Yesterday's Jumbles: FIFTY HONOR PATTERN STYLUS

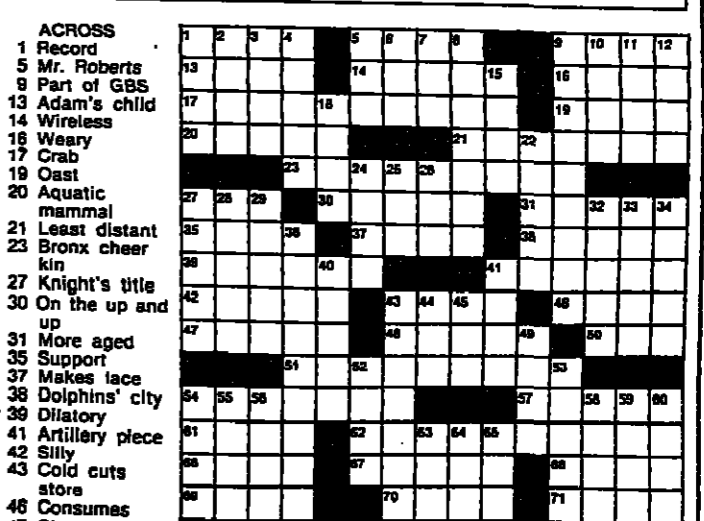
Answer: She called him by his first name and was after this—HIS LAST

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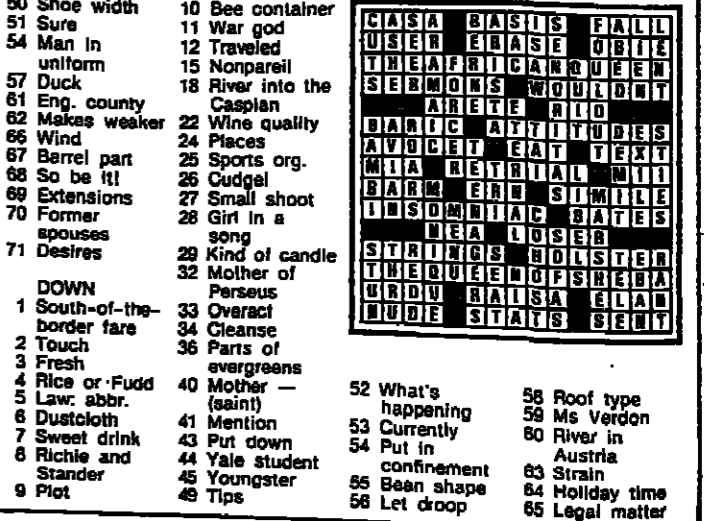
Include your name, address and zip code and make checks payable to JumbleBooks.

THE Daily Crossword by James Barrick



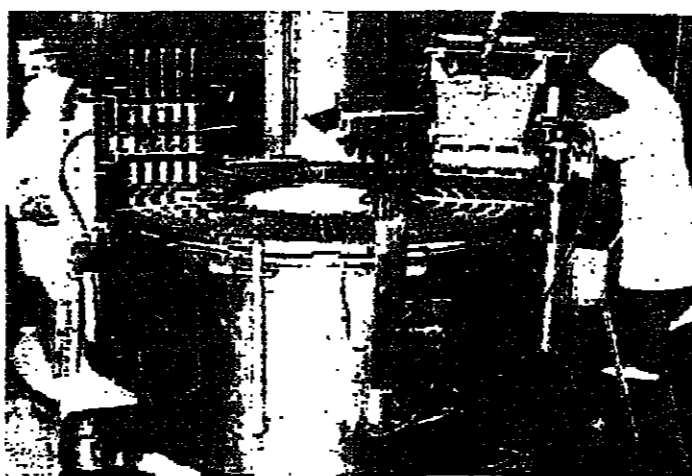
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Yesterday's Puzzle Solved:

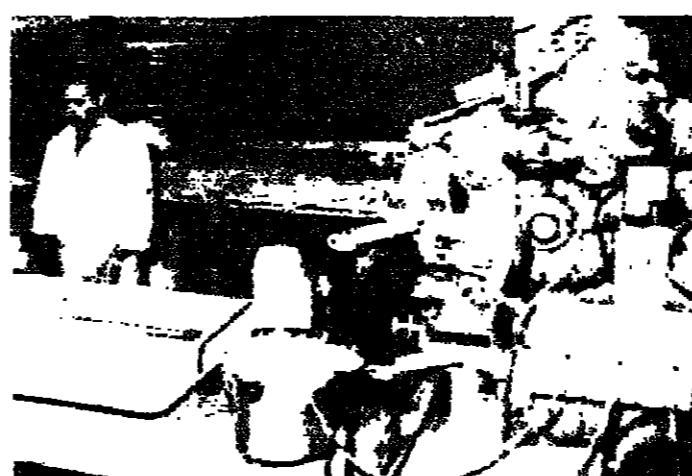




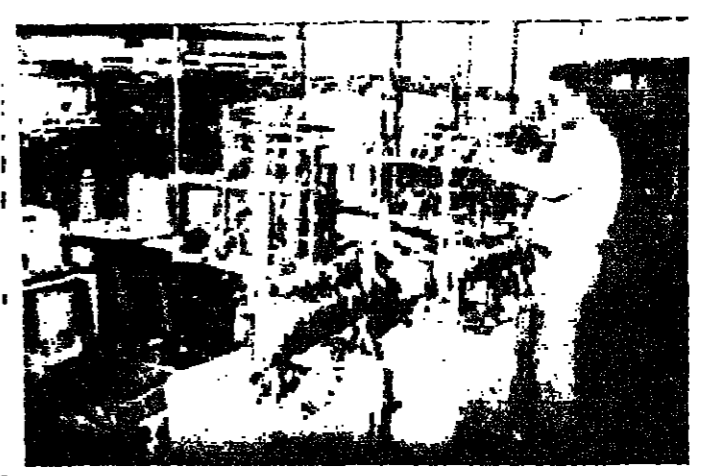
Carpenter Turki Mriyan working on new machines financed by IDB (File photo).



Processing confectionery at Ata Ali factory in Wadi Seer (IDB photo).



Manufacturing paper products (File photo).



Manufacturing of socks at Al Nahda plant in Marka (IDB photo).

Jordan's IDB reactivates small industries and handicraft fund

By Samir Shafiq
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — After three years of reorganisation and reevaluation, the Industrial Development Bank (IDB) last year reactivated its small scale industries and handicraft (SSIH) fund by boosting its lending to 119 beneficiaries for a total of JD 599,600.

The activity takes up significance because in 1986 the SSIH fund extended JD 1.2 million in loans to 404 borrowers but since the amounts and number of beneficiaries has continued to decline every year reaching only JD 152,600 distributed among 53 clients in 1989.

SSIH fund manager Mahmoud Al Lahham explained that the reason behind the 1987-1989 retreat was a decision taken by the bank to redraw the fund's credit policies.

Mr. Lahham said that the expansion of SSIH fund lending in 1986 and the years before created stiff competition among craftsmen of the same trade who, in many cases, operated in the same geographical area.

The situation, Mr. Lahham added, necessitated a new look and a sound lending approach which culminated in adopting

more in-depth analysis of a given project and a policy of high selectivity to ensure its success.

In 1990, the bank also doubled the amount it usually lends through its SSIH window from JD 4,000 to JD 8,000 realising that the old amount was dwarfed by the devaluation of the dinar and the rising inflation since.

Another factor for the increase in SSIH activity in 1990 was cited by Mr. Lahham as being the return of thousands of expatriates who fled the Gulf crisis seeking to set up small industries or workshops in the Kingdom.

He further noted that the IDB last year began for the first time to extend SSIH credits to small scale activities in medical services.

As a result, 29 loans were granted to laboratories and clinics.

The bank also continued delegating one of its staff to set up offices twice a week at the Housing Bank branches at Irbid and Karak for acquainting owners of small scale industries and handicrafts in the northern and southern regions of the Kingdom with available financing opportunities, and provide them with the necessary loans at those locations.

Of the loans approved during

1990 about 32.3 per cent were for laboratories and clinics; 13.1 per cent were for food products projects, and the rest were for other miscellaneous projects such as garments and knitting, car maintenance, building materials, metal works and printing and photography.

Total number of loans since the inception of SSIH in 1975 until last year stood at 2,399 loans totalling JD 6.97 million.

Disbursement of small scale industries and handicraft fund during 1990 amounted to 475,200 and repayments were JD 611,500 of which JD 297,100 were amounts due in 1990, thus the rate of repayment for 1990 amounted to 39.1 per cent.

In overall operations, the IDB approved 97 loans totalling JD 15.2 million of which 86 loans totalling JD 13.3 million were extended to industrial projects and eleven loans totalling JD 1.8 million were extended to tourism projects.

Amount of loans for 1990 marked an increase of 7.5 per cent over their level in 1989.

Total cost of new and expansion projects financed during the year is estimated at JD 34.2 million and job opportunities to be created in these projects are estimated at 905 jobs.

Loan applications received during 1990 numbered 169 (including 23 applications carried over from 1989) covering various fields of industry such as pharmaceuticals, detergents, plastic, food, garments and leather products in addition to tourism projects.

Out of this number 97 applications were approved by the board and 14 applications were carried over to 1991. The rest were not processed due to non-responsiveness on the part of applicants.

Out of the loans approved during 1990, 18 loans were extended to new projects for manufacturing computers, pressing machines, sports shoes, garments and food products. Seven loans were also granted for the construction of therapeutic hotel at the Dead Sea coast and other new hotels in Amman, Irbid, Wadi Mousa/Petra and Aqaba.

Another new industrial project for the production of printing ink was given a risk capital loan.

Amount of loans extended for financing expansion plans and raw materials purchases was JD 11 million or 72.1 per cent of the total.

Over 51 per cent of industrial loans approved during 1990 were

for the purchase of machinery and 30.8 per cent for the purchase of raw materials.

Tourism projects accounts for 12.2 per cent of approved loans and risk capital loans accounted for 0.5 per cent of industrial loans.

During 1990, one loan totalling JD 5,000 was cancelled and three loans were reduced by JD 355,000 bringing the actual number of loans approved since the bank was established to 1,436 loans totalling JD 124.7 million.

JD 15.5 million fell due last year out of which JD 13.4 million were repaid, thus the rate of repayment for the year amounted to 86.81 per cent. A sum of JD 2.1 million was also repaid out of due amounts from previous years.

The IDB invested JD 45,000 in the equity of an existing project. The bank's total equity investments by the end of 1990 stood at 4.9 million of which JD 4.4 million have been paid and the balance of JD 0.55 million represent pending instalments due to a number of projects.

During 1990, the IDB participated with two local banks in syndicating a loan of JD 450,000 in favour of Arab Investment and International Trading Co. The

loan was managed by IDB.

By the end of 1990, the number of syndicated loans which the bank has participated in and/or arranged and managed stands at 26 loans totalling JD 77.2 million.

The bank continued its activities as broker at the Amman Financial Market (AFM), which include portfolio management, trading in shares and bonds and rendering consultancy services in security investment.

Total value of stock transactions executed by the bank amounted to JD 32.6 million or 0.1 per cent of total stock transactions at the AFM compared with JD 49.4 million or 0.4 per cent in 1989.

The amount of loans disbursed by the IDB totalled JD 15.3 million last year while disbursements for equity investments and bonds were JD 49,000 and JD 791,000 respectively.

Outstanding loans at the end of 1990 stood at JD 49.7 million while repayment of loans stood at JD 15.5 million.

According to the IDB annual report, total assets were JD 69.6 million, down from JD 74.6 million at the end of 1989. The decline was due to year-end adjustments of institutional de-

posits held at the bank by some local companies.

The IDB, whose capital stands at JD 600 million and total net worth at JD 800 million, registered a net profit of JD 1.2 million last year, down from JD 1.5 million achieved during 1989.

However, the 1990 profit should have read JD 1.6 million if "suspended interest earnings" were to be taken into consideration as such an accounting practice was implemented in 1990 to reflect the true picture of operations.

which normally record a profit when actually received.

Dividends to shareholders were recommended to the general assembly meeting last month at 10.5 per cent per JD 1 nominal value of each share compared to 11 per cent last year.

The IDB continues to play a major role in Jordan's industrialisation drive as its loans continue to expand averaging 31,156,400 per loan in 1990 from JD 122,600 and JD 116,000 in the previous years.



Production of nails at the National Nails Manufacturing Company (File photo).

AMMAN EXCHANGE RATES

Thursday, April 11, 1991
Central Bank official rates

Buy Sell
U.S. dollar 676.0-680.0
Pound Sterling 1202.2-1209.4

Deutschmark 402.0 404.4
Swiss franc 473.9 476.7
French franc 118.9 119.6
Japanese yen (for 100) 495.1 498.1
Dutch guilder 357.2 359.3
Swedish crown 111.5 112.2
Italian lira (for 100) 56.4 56.7
Belgian franc (for 10) 195.7 196.9

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Friday.

One Sterling	1.7878/88	U.S. dollar
One U.S. dollar	1.1505/10	Canadian dollar
	1.6725/35	Deutschmarks
	1.8830/40	Dutch guilders
	1.4150/57	Swiss francs
	34.36/40	Belgian francs
	5.6450/6500	French francs
	1241/1242	Italian lire
	155.80/90	Japanese yen
	6.0300/50	Swedish crowns
	6.5000/50	Norwegian crowns
	6.4050/4100	Danish crowns
One ounce of gold	361.50/362.00	U.S. dollars

WORLD STOCK MARKETS

TOKYO — Stocks ended slightly firmer but many investors waited on the sidelines before the release of key U.S. consumer price data. The Nikkei closed up 157.31 points, or 0.60 per cent, at 26,582.50 with 360 million shares traded.

SYDNEY — The market rose as investors pinned their hopes on interest rates easing in the U.S. and Australia. The All Ordinaries index closed 1.5 points higher at 1,455.8.

HONG KONG — Stocks finished higher. Brokers said prices were boosted by optimism about progress of talks in Beijing on a planned port and airport project. The Hang Seng gained 38.07 points to close at 3,742.00.

SINGAPORE — Prices rose on selective buying. The Straits Times index ended at 1,481.67, up 10.70.

BOMBAY — New account trading sent the Bombay Stock Exchange index up 28.74 points to 1,288.02. "The bulls were in full cry," said broker Vallabh Bhansali.

FRANKFURT — A British interest rate cut and unexpectedly favourable German prices data sent share prices higher. The DAX index closed up 17.77 at 1,583.14.

ZURICH — Prices finished higher in moderate trading before an extended weekend, underpinned by the overnight gain on Wall Street and news of a surprise fall in U.S. March consumer prices. The SPI index closed up 8.9 at 1,083.1.

PARIS — Shares continued mixed at midsession as cautious investors kept largely to the sidelines. At 1124 GMT the CAC-40 index was up 0.15 per cent at 1,828.28.

LONDON — Prices lost ground in late trading as Wall Street stocks gave up early gains. At 1600 the FTSE index was down 3.6 at 2,528.0.

Britain cuts interest rates as inflation tumbles

LONDON (R) — The British government cut interest rates for the fourth time in two months Friday after further signs that it was winning the battle against inflation.

The Bank of England, Britain's central bank, said it was cutting its money market dealing rate by half a percentage point. Commercial banks followed suit, reducing their base lending rates by the same amount to 12 per cent.

At the same time the annual increase in the retail price index, the main indicator of inflation, fell to 8.2 per cent in March from 8.9 per cent in February.

Both pieces of news were seen as welcome relief for Prime Minister John Major, struggling to restore faith in the ruling Conservative Party which has been undermined by economic recession.

Treasury officials said even better news awaited Major next month when, because of special factors, the annual inflation rate for April was likely to drop to just over six per cent.

This would be roughly on a par with Switzerland — suffering from abnormally high inflation — and would confirm Britain was on course to reach a fourth quarter target of four per cent, bringing it more in line with other European Community states.

Building societies said they would cut their own home loan interest rates, a major factor in inflation calculations and one of the most politically-sensitive economic measures as they affect millions of home-owners.

Richard Brown, director of policy at the British Chambers of Commerce, praised Chancellor of the Exchequer Norman Lamont for the progressive interest rate cuts.

"The chancellor is slowly removing straws from the camel's back. Our quarterly economic surveys are showing that businesses are still suffering from falling orders and declining output, but we are beginning to see confidence rising again," he pointed out.

Stuart Frost, a financial analyst at National Westminster Bank in London, said: "The government wants interest rates to come down fast. Recent surveys by the Confederation of British Industry show the worst (of the recession) is behind us."

JORDAN TIMES
TEL. 667171

Germany again reports yawning deficit in balance of payments

FRANKFURT (R) — Germany, struggling with the effects of unification and the Gulf war, has reported a yawning balance of payments deficit for the second month running, jolting currency markets.

The Federal Statistics Office said the current account of the balance of payments showed a deficit of 1.7 billion marks (\$1 billion) in February, more than three times the shortfall that many financial analysts had predicted.

It also issued a revised January figure of 2.1 billion marks (\$1.24 billion), the worst deficit in eight years.

The current account covers trade in goods and services.

"Our surpluses are melting away like snow," said Deutsche Bank economist Karl-Heinz Schlottbauer.

"Because of the storm of imports and weak economies abroad, we are going to have to live with further reductions. Naturally, this doesn't help the mark," he said.

Germany traditionally has a high trade surplus and the reversals of the past two months have come as a shock.

The opening of the eastern part

of the German market to Western goods has spurred a large influx of imports, encouraged by the collapse of much of the economy in the east since unification in October.

"There is too much consumption and too little investment in eastern Germany," Schlottbauer said. "The mix is not correct and this is showing up in the current account."

Imports rose by 14 per cent in February while exports fell by 3.9 per cent.

February's figures were pushed further into the red by Germany's three billion mark (\$1.8 billion) contribution to the allied war effort in the Gulf. Another six billion marks (\$3.6 billion) were transferred in March.

"Seasonal factors and the Gulf war payments are giving a rather distorted picture of the current account," said Warren Oliver, economist at UBS Phillips and

Drew in London.

He said no one should be surprised if the current account stayed in deficit in March. Commerzbank economist Peter Putsch said the strength of the mark earlier in the year amplified the impact of the weakening economies in Britain and the United States.

The dollar hit record low levels around 1.4430 mark in mid-February.

"The strong mark at the start of the year made the tough export conditions all the more difficult," he said. "It made already expensive German exports even dearer. And I doubt the weak mark we now have will help much because it will make imports more expensive."

Chancellor Helmut Kohl, meanwhile spoke of signs that the depressed economy in former communist East Germany was on the road to recovery.

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4- Knowledge of word processor operating will be considered as an advantage.
Curriculum vitae with photo to be sent by mail to the following address

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Amman — Jordan

TODAY AT

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CONCORD
PRETTY WOMAN
Show: 3:30, 8:30, 10:30 p.m.

Cinema Tel: 675571
NIJOU
BAT MAN
Show: 12:30, 3:30, 8:30, 10:30 p.m.

Cinema Tel: 625155
RAINBOW
Adel Imam & Yusra
in
'Karakon' in the street
(Arabic)
3:30, 8:30 p.m.

Cinema Tel: 634144
PHILADELPHIA
MICKEY ROURKE...IN
A PRAYER FOR THE DYING
12:30, 3:30, 8:30, 10:30

Cinema Tel: 699238
PLAZA
FINE MESS
Show: 12:30, 3:15, 8:00, 10:00 p.m.

Kohl, opposition to cooperate in bid to rescue eastern Germany

BONN (R) — German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and the opposition Social Democrats (SPD) agreed Friday to an urgent programme of cooperation to help rescue eastern Germany from economic collapse.

Kohl and SPD Chairman Hans-Jochen Vogel, meeting amid talk of a possible national unity government to tackle the crisis, set up two working groups to thrash out a joint approach, a government spokesman said.

But neither the Christian Democratic (CDU) chancellor, sliding in popularity only four months after winning the first all-German elections, nor the SPD want this step to lead to a grand coalition.

"The chancellor said his talk with SPD Chairman Vogel was constructive, very reasonable and held in a very good atmosphere," spokesman Dieter Vogel told journalists.

"The chancellor suggested two working groups, one to consider the quick construction of an effective administration in the east and the issue of property rights, and the other to deal with problems with the job market in former east Germany."

The SPD leader expressed satisfaction with the meeting, which his party has been demanding for weeks, and said: "There is complete agreement that the situation in eastern Germany is serious and extraordinary measures are called for."

Kohl's talks with the SPD formalised a shift away from his original German unity policy, which critics denounced as a cold shower switch from Communism to capitalism, towards a more active state role to ensure a "soft landing" for the eastern economy.

Up to four million easterners — half the workforce — may be

jobless by mid-summer, officials say, while the restructuring needed to create new jobs for them could take years.

Kurt Biedenkopf, CDU premier of Saxony, welcomed the new bipartisan approach and urged Bonn to continue its emergency subsidies to his and the four other eastern states until the year 2000 to help them attain Western living standards.

Both Kohl and Vogel rejected suggestions their cooperation should lead to a grand coalition, an option Bonn tried with disappointing results during a recession in the late 1960s.

"All this should in no way blur the natural differences between government and opposition," spokesman Vogel said after sketching out his deal with Kohl.

While offering to help, the SPD leader ruled out joint appearances with Kohl at rallies in the east or anything else that

made it seem his party was absolving the government or agreeing with its policies to date.

The collapse of the old Communist administration and delays in building up a Western-style bureaucracy in the east have bogged down Bonn's attempts to pump federal funds down to the local level and promote private investment from Western firms.

Uncertainty over property rights has blocked investment as outsiders shy away from buying factories or farms that could later be found to be confiscated properties that must be returned to those who owned them prior to the Communist era.

The SPD chairman said the job market group would discuss his party's proposal for large state-funded companies to retrain workers otherwise headed for the dole queue, but Kohl's spokesman did not mention this.



Gen. John Galvin

NATO discusses radical plans for new forces

BRUSSELS (R) — NATO's top military commanders discussed plans for a radical reshaping of the West's defences Friday, including more "rapid reaction" multinational units and fewer forces in Europe now the Soviet threat has withered.

Chiefs of staff from NATO's 16 member nations, winding up a two-day meeting in Brussels, discussed a plan which NATO sources said would totally change the alliance's military structure.

This has traditionally comprised large, rigidly-organised units designed to fight a war in central Europe against forces of the now-defunct Warsaw Pact.

"What we want now is total flexibility, to be able to deploy forces rapidly to face any emerging threat to the alliance, not just a single threat," said one NATO military source.

The plan, suggested by U.S. General John Galvin, supreme allied commander Europe, would have to be approved by the alliance's political leaders.

However, it follows guidelines set out by NATO leaders last year, when, celebrating the end of the cold war, they pledged smaller forces, more multinational units and fewer nuclear weapons.

It also takes account of other potential threats to NATO territory, dangers which were highlighted by the Gulf war as NATO member Turkey and Iraq share a common border.

As a result, Galvin has drawn up a plan that allows for "rapid reaction" multinational forces to be deployed anywhere on NATO territory — from the Arctic wastes to the mountains of south-eastern Turkey.

An initial force, of anything up to a brigade of 5,000 men, would be ready for deployment in a matter of days. It would be lightly-armed and would include several nations to show NATO unity.

NATO could then add to this force as necessary, with battalions or brigades. Galvin's plan envisages anything up to a corps-sized unit (usually between 70,000 and 100,000 men) being ready for deployment as a "rapid reaction force."

Main defence units, also likely to be multinational corps, will continue to be stationed in Central Europe and other areas. But they will also be more mobile.

Star Wars still geared to block Soviet attack

WASHINGTON (R) — The Star Wars programme's ultimate goal is still to defend against a massive Soviet nuclear attack despite President George Bush's order to refocus on lesser threats like Soviet missiles in the Gulf war, U.S. officials said Thursday.

In statements to the Senate Armed Services Committee, they made clear that Bush's order did not change the Star Wars programme but rather directed that defences against limited attacks be studied first.

Bush said in the State of the Union message in January that he had directed Star Wars to be refocused to improve on Patriot missiles in defending U.S. troops and allies.

The Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI) programme, popularly known as Star Wars, is researching whether U.S. space or ground weapons or both could be deployed to shoot down enemy missiles.

Admiral David Jeremiah, vice chairman of the military Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), said Thursday the chiefs have not changed

their original requirement that a first-phase Star Wars system should also be able to shoot down at least half the nuclear missiles the Soviet Union could fire in a war.

Jeremiah said the joint chiefs also support limited defences such as those Bush mentioned and said their requirement for a defence from any Soviet attack did not conflict with Bush's announcement.

The admiral said it was only a question of "which part of that apple you are going to bite at first."

Undersecretary of Defence Paul Wolfowitz agreed that Bush had not changed Star Wars from the Joint Chiefs' ultimate goal of defending against a Soviet nuclear war attack.

The Soviet Union has said the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), being negotiated in Geneva to cut some types of nuclear weapons by as much as half, would be nullified if the United States put a Star Wars system in space.

India sets dates for May general election

NEW DELHI (R) India's Election Commission Friday set May 20, 23 and 26 as polling dates for a general election aimed at ending months of political instability in the world's most populous democracy.

Three dates are needed so security forces can be moved around the country to curb any attempt to coerce India's 521 million voters.

Political analysts so far see no party emerging with a clear majority from the election, called after inconclusive polls in November 1989 led to the collapse of two minority governments within 16 months.

The commission said in a statement that dates for voting in Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab and

Assam, where security forces are fighting insurgencies, would be announced later.

India's caretaker government asked the commission Thursday to arrange polls at both national and state level in Punjab and Assam, but did not mention Jammu and Kashmir, the only Muslim-majority state in the overwhelmingly Hindu country. Jammu and Kashmir Governor Girish Saxena told foreign correspondents on Friday that elections could not be held there because of the turmoil and because major parties were not prepared to put up candidates.

Elections for state assemblies would end Delhi's direct rule in Punjab since 1987, and in Assam since last November.

Kennedy nephew calls rape charge a 'damnable lie'

MIAMI (R) — William Kennedy Smith, nephew of U.S. Senator Edward Kennedy, said a Florida woman's claim that he raped her was a "damnable lie."

Smith, a medical student in Washington, issued the statement a few hours after police in Palm Beach, Florida, said they planned to release the entire police report prepared by investigators after the alleged rape on March 30.

Police have said Smith was a key suspect in the alleged rape of a 29-year-old woman on a beach outside the Kennedy family's Palm Beach compound.

"I emphatically deny that the woman in question was abused or that force was used by me in any way. Any suggestion to the contrary is a damnable lie," Smith said in a statement issued by a Washington law firm.

Last weekend, Smith provided police with blood and hair samples but refused to answer detectives' questions.

The case, which has won saturation press coverage across the United States, has added to a

long string of scandals and tragedies that have touched the Kennedy family.

Police spokesman William Atkinson said authorities would release copies of the investigative report Friday.

According to reports published a week ago the young woman told police she was grabbed by the ankle and then assaulted while walking back to the Kennedy compound from the beach.

She and Smith had been walking on the beach and he was reported to have taken off his clothes for a swim before she started to walk back to the mansion.

The Miami Herald quoted a source close to the Kennedy family as saying the night ended with Smith kissing the victim.

"As (the woman) was leaving the compound, she got in her car, got a goodnight kiss from Willie and drives out and goes south," the source told the newspaper.

Preliminary results from lab tests on blood and hair samples are due early next week.

COLUMN

Dark object discovered in space

NEW YORK (AP) — Astronomers have found a mysterious object about 100 billion times as massive as the sun, and they say it is either the largest black hole ever found or a completely new, unexplained phenomenon.

The huge mass and its great concentration and darkness are puzzling and unlike any found previously, said Joss Bland-Hawthorn of Rice University, one of the discoverers. The object's mass is roughly equal to that of all the stars in the Milky Way galaxy, Bland-Hawthorn said. Yet it is compressed into a space 10,000 times smaller.

The object was discovered by Bland-Hawthorn, Andrew Wilson of the University of Maryland and R. Brent Tully of the University of Hawaii using a telescope atop the extinct volcano Mauna Kea in Hawaii. They reported their findings in April's issue of the Astrophysical Journal. They were searching an unusual galaxy called NGC 6240 when they discovered the object inside it. NGC 6240 attracted their attention because it emits a high level of infrared radiation.

Udipe, Simon win Pulitzer prizes

NEW YORK — John Udipe, one of America's most respected novelists, Neil Simon, its most popular playwright, and a woman reporter who stayed in Kuwait after Iraq's invasion won Pulitzer Prizes Tuesday in awards that honoured the growing role of women in U.S. journalism.

Of the 25 awards, 11 were won by women including the top Pulitzer Journalism Award — the gold medal for public service — which went to Jane Schorer of Des Moines Register for a pathbreaking series on a woman rape victim's ordeal. Robert Christopher, secretary of the Pulitzer Prize Board, said this year's awards contained the highest number of women winners in the Pulitzer's 75 year history and "reflects the growing importance of women in American journalism."

The prizes are the highest awards given annually for U.S. print journalism and the arts. Udipe and Simon won for works that the critics have hailed as the best each man has produced over long writing careers.

Violence against women 'out of control' in U.S.

WASHINGTON (R) — A senior U.S. senator, warning that violence against American women was out of control, called for stronger national and state laws to protect them.

"The United States leads the world in the number and rate of rapes," Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Joseph Biden, a Delaware Democrat, said at a hearing. "Violence against women is out of control." The committee released a report two weeks ago that found that rapes in the United States reached record highs in 1990, with a rape reported every six minutes. Biden said rapes and other crimes against women were often not treated as seriously as other crimes and called for a change in attitudes by law-enforcement agencies.

"For too long, our society has looked the other way at this nightmare," he said. Biden's bill, introduced last year and now in its fourth series of committee hearings, would double the national penalty for rape, currently five years in prison. It applies only to rapes committed on federal property such as military bases or national parks. Each state sets its own penalty for rape, and the average sentence is 13 years, committee sources said. But the crime is often bargained down to lesser sex charges to which the defendant agrees to plead guilty instead of going to trial.

'Dead man' walks in as funeral is about to start

TOKYO (R) — An elderly Japanese woman, busy making funeral plans, got the shock of her life when her son walked into the house 17 hours after police and relatives pronounced him dead. Police said Wednesday. Police found a body, apparently a hit-and-run victim, on a road near the family home in Gunma prefecture north of Tokyo. They contacted the old woman's family, who identified the body as her 55-year-old son. Later it transpired the son had been staying at a friend's house, and had rushed home when he heard from a neighbour he was "dead." Police said they had resumed efforts to establish the identity of the corp-

Senate rejects Bush choice for judge

WASHINGTON (R) — A Senate committee Thursday rejected President George Bush's nomination of Kenneth Ryskamp as an appeals judge after Democrats alleged he had ruled against victims of discrimination.

Senator Edward Kennedy and other opponents also said Ryskamp should be rejected because he had been a member of the Riviera Country Club in Coral Gables, Florida, which allegedly discriminates against blacks and Jews. Ryskamp resigned from the club just before his confirmation

hearings began.

All eight Democrats on the Judiciary Committee voted to kill the nomination while all six Republicans supported him.

Ryskamp, 58, was the first of more than 70 Bush judicial nominees to be defeated. The Senate must confirm all presidential nominations to be federal judges.

Bush named Ryskamp, a federal judge in Miami, to be a judge on the court of appeals for the 11th circuit, which hears appeals from Florida, Georgia and Alabama.

"Judge Ryskamp does not deserve a seat on that great court," Kennedy, a Massachusetts Democrat, said before the vote. "He has been repeatedly reversed by unanimous panels of that court in civil rights cases for overruling jury verdicts and going outside the record to rule against victims of unlawful discrimination."

White House spokesman Martin Fitzwater said the administration was disappointed and did not believe Ryskamp was insensitive to minorities.

Aquino defends choice of new military chief

MANILA (R) — President Corason Aquino Friday installed a new chief of the Philippine Armed Forces, sharply defending her controversial choice and dismissing army rebels as a spent force.

Aquino, who has survived six coup attempts during five years in power, said she selected Major-General Lisandro Abadía because he was a tough soldier who believed in democracy.

The choice of Abadía in preference to other more senior generals sparked controversy and fears of a fresh coup attempt.

But retiring Chief-of-Staff Lieutenant-General Rodolfo Biazon dismissed coup threats as empty talk, despite several bomb attacks in Manila blamed by police on rightwing rebels.

President Aquino, swept to power in a popular revolt against the late President Ferdinand Marcos, said rightwing army rebels had been reduced by Biazon to just a handful of fugitives.

Eleven rebel leaders have been captured since the beginning of the year.

"The unmitigated contempt in which the rightists are now held by the public they have victimised is the best testimony of the work General Biazon has done," Aquino told troops and officials at the handover ceremony.

Fears about the reaction of the armed forces were prompted by

the abrupt resignation Monday of Deputy Chief-of-Staff Major-General Alexander Aguirre, who warned of new unrest because Aquino had bypassed senior generals.

Indirectly referring to Aguirre's resignation, Aquino dismissed his public criticism as "a vain attempt to embarrass this occasion."

The 58-year-old president said Abadía was a highly professional officer who was among the cream of the military.

"We do not wish him luck as luck had nothing to do with his selection. We expect him instead to demonstrate the qualities of honour, obedience, intelligence and courage for which he was chosen..." Aquino said.

Abadía will be responsible for ensuring peace and security during presidential elections in May next year.

In his acceptance speech, Abadía pledged the neutrality of the armed forces in the coming elections.

He vowed to effect what he termed the "strategic defeat" of the Communist insurgency in the Philippines by 1992. Biazon said changes in Eastern Europe had left the Communists ideological orphans, and their defeat was now certain.

The Communists have been fighting for a Marxist state in the Philippines for the past 22 years.

Kashmir governor optimistic on kidnapped Swedes

NEW DELHI (R) — The governor of Indian-ruled Kashmir struck an optimistic note Friday over the fate of two Swedish engineers kidnapped by separatist militants nearly two weeks ago.

Girish Saxena hinted to foreign correspondents that a deal was possible for the freedom of Johan Jansson, 35, and Jan-Ole Loman, 37, despite India's rejection of the separatists' demands.

"A hard and rigid attitude is hard to take when dealing with human lives," he said.

Saxena declined to give details of what the Indian government was proposing or how it was being communicated as the Saturday deadline set by the separatists drew closer.

But he emphasised that twice during the 15-month-old insurgency, in which police have reported 2,400 deaths, the government had released detained militants in exchange for kidnap victims.

"They know we hold many of their chaps," he said of the Muslim Janabaz (Crusader) Force. The MJF claimed responsibility for the kidnapping three days after the two Swedes were seized on March 31 on their way home from a Sunday outing.

"Channels are being used to get the message to the militants that they have not gained anything through this," he said.

"It would be a very stupid thing for them to harm the Swedish nationals," he said, but added a warning that he was dealing with "irrational and unpredictable people."

The two Swedes were the first foreigners kidnapped in Jammu and Kashmir. Hindu India's only Muslim-majority state, since the rebellion erupted in the Himalayan region.

Among the MJF militants under arrest is their leader, Babbar Badar, captured Tuesday in a raid on a house in the old quarter of Srinagar, the state's summer capital and hotbed of rebellion.

A tape-recorded message from the two men who identified themselves as Jansson and Loman was sent to an international news agency in Srinagar Thursday.

In it the two men expressed fear of their captors, who have threatened "extreme measures" if their demands are not met.

"I really feel nervous now," said the man who identified himself as Jansson. "Save us."

The captors have to take action now and they mean what they say because their demands... to investigate human rights abuses have not been answered so far," said the man who identified himself as Loman.

The MJF demanded that in exchange for the two Swedes human rights teams from the United Nations and Amnesty International be sent to probe widespread allegations of security force atrocities.

India and Amnesty International rejected the demand.

Togo government claim on deaths challenged

LOME (R) — Human rights activists in Togo Friday disputed government claims that 26 people whose bodies were found in a Lome lagoon were killed by criminals and called for a full investigation.

As the West African state prepared for a return to multi-party democracy after violent anti-government protests, the capital remained in a state of shock after the grisly discovery in a working class suburb.

Koffi Goh Kokou, head of the Togolese League of Human Rights, challenged the official claim that the killings of the mostly young victims were by criminals or people trying to stir up violence against President Gnassingbe Eyadema.

"I could imagine that might be the case if there were one death," he said in a telephone interview.

"But I can't imagine the people of the Be district deliberately going out and assassinating each other. Our information shows that it was not the people who did it. There would be no sense to it."

He called on the government to investigate the possibility that the victims were killed by the military — a belief held by most people.

Eyadema, one of Africa's longest-serving leaders, is trying to ride out his worst crisis since seizing power in 1967.

The resignation of the 54-year-old military leader has become the chief demand of the demonstrators who staged violent protests in the capital last month.

Eyadema has had to agree to political reforms, including an amnesty for people implicated in bombings and a coup plot in the mid-1980, which will allow opposition political parties for the first time since he took power.

Japan hopes for breakthrough in Gorbachev visit

TOKYO (R) — Only four days before a historic visit by Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, Japan said it was hopeful of a breakthrough in removing the biggest obstacle blocking the signing of a World War II peace treaty.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Taizo Watanabe said Friday that Japan's ambassador to Moscow handed Gorbachev Thursday a letter from Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu in which he said he expected the visit would be a "breakthrough for dynamic development" in bilateral relations.

Watanabe told a news conference the two countries had agreed on most of the articles for a World War II peace treaty but nothing had been decided on the toughest issue — four islands off northern Japan seized by the Soviet army in 1945 whose return to Japan demands as a precondition for a treaty.

"Gorbachev started perestroika, allowed the democratisation of East Europe and the unification of Germany," he said. "If anyone can bring about a dynamic change, it is Gorbachev."

"He must be capable of doing dynamic changes in Asia as he has done in Europe," he added. But he gave no hint of whether the two sides were close to any agreement on the islands issue.

For weeks, Tokyo has been awash with speculation. Newspapers have reported the government would offer up to \$28 billion in aid in exchange for the four islands.

Watanabe denied there would be any linkage between the return of the islands and economic aid.

"Islands-for-money would not contribute to building mutual trust and confidence. This we have to build first. Money would not be useful if there was no political stability and mutual trust," he said.

Japanese journalists and television crews have been illegally visiting the islands, providing exhaustive coverage of their history and the life and opinions of their residents.

A group of former Japanese residents of the islands proposed Thursday that, once the islands were returned, Soviet and Japanese people would live there together and the islands would be demilitarised as a symbol of friendship.

Neither government has given any hint of compromise.

Japan's position, repeated by Watanabe Friday, is that Moscow must concede sovereignty over all four islands and return them. Moscow says the islands are Soviet territory but in 1956 offered to return two of them.

A repeat of this offer without conceding sovereignty over all four is unlikely to be considered a breakthrough by Japan.

An Asian diplomat said a breakthrough was not likely. "Gorbachev will announce he is prepared to open negotiations on the islands issue. That is the furthest he can go, given the opposition of his military and the demands for independence from several Soviet republics," he said.

For its part, Tokyo has a series of policies ready for any possible Soviet position and will respond positively to any concession from

the Soviet side because it wants the visit to be a success, the diplomat added.

A second Japanese Foreign Ministry official said economic cooperation was not on the agenda for the Gorbachev-Kaifu talks, unless it was brought up by the Soviet side.

A second Asian diplomat said Gorbachev would spring no surprises. "His first meeting with Kaifu will be critical. Japan will learn what he can offer and will respond accordingly."

Watanabe said Gorbachev would sign Thursday a dozen agreements on subjects such as technical help for Gorbachev's policy of perestroika (restructuring), aid for victims of the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster, environmental protection, trade and cultural exchanges.

One agreement will concern the more than 60,000 Japanese who died in Soviet labour camps after World War II. No details were disclosed. Japanese veteran groups have demanded an apology, compensation and the return of their remains.

Gorbachev is due to arrive in Tokyo Tuesday and hold at least three meetings with Kaifu. Watanabe said more meetings might be held.

After leaving Tokyo, Gorbachev is due to visit Kyoto, Osaka and Nagasaki but not Hiroshima, as some Japanese newspapers have reported, before flying Friday to Cheju Island to meet South Korean President Roh Tae-Woo.

Koreans protest in Seoul
In Seoul, police fired teargas Fri-

day to disperse about 1,000 South Korean students tossing fire-bombs in protest at the visit by Gorbachev, eyewitnesses said.

Students at Seoul's Hankook University of foreign studies scattered leaflets deriding the South Korean government's pledge of \$3 billion in loans and trade credits to the Soviet Union over the next three years.

"We oppose Gorbach's visit," the students chanted as they tossed more than a thousand petrol bombs at police. No major injuries were reported, the eyewitnesses said.

They said the clashes at South Korea's premier institution for foreign languages and international affairs lasted more than two hours.

The leaflets said Roh was using "beggar's diplomacy" and described the loans and trade credits as "bait" to attract the Soviet president and win his approval for South Korea's expected application later this year to join the United Nations.

South Korea and the Soviet Union established full diplomatic relations last September. Gorbachev will stop for a few hours on Cheju Island on his way home from a four-day trip to Japan.

The scheduled meeting has drawn mixed reviews in Seoul. Most South Koreans support the meeting but opposition politicians and some newspaper editors have been critical that the Soviet leader is not coming to Seoul.

The Cheju stopover will be the first visit to the Korean peninsula by a Soviet leader.